certain dark things

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/29684736.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Alana Bloom, Jack Crawford, Eldon Stammets, Tobias Budge, Bella Crawford
Additional Tags:	Plot With Porn, Sub Hannibal, Dom/sub, d/s verse, which is like, Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, but different - i hope youll like it, BDSM, Safe Sane and Consensual, its acutally mostly plot and a little porn as a treat, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter is the Chesapeake Ripper, Cannibalism, Anal Sex, Oral Sex, but also there are a lot of feelings, Hannnibal hides his dynamic, Bondage, BAMF Will Graham, Choking, communication and consent! in hannigram? yes we can!, Virginity Kink, or a little at least, Orgasm Delay, Rimming, Spanking, Alternate Universe - BDSM, Non-Traditional Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Dom Will Graham
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Kinky Fics Will Would Catch Encephalitis For Stars*, Wendigo & Stag, Hannigram gold, Hannibal Rereads, I can and have reread this. Again. And again., Murder_husbands, HanniGrahams, A/B/O faves
Collections:	
Stats:	Published: 2021-02-24 Completed: 2021-03-18 Words: 28,090 Chapters: 5/5

certain dark things

by multifandom_fanfic_writer

Summary

"Now, you will ***kneel***."

Will opens his mouth and issues his Command. And Hannibal, who has spent forty-four years defying his dynamic, who has never once in his life followed *anyone's* commands-

-falls to his knees.

Notes

Inspired by Hiding in Plain Sight and literally all Hannigram works by Everybreathagift!

See the end of the work for more notes

- Inspired by Hiding in Plain Sight by Kalimyre

a demon, which is only a god too strange for humans to understand

Chapter Notes

This fic is set in a world were people have a Dynamic (Dominant/Submissive/non-dynamic), which is seperate from their gender (male/female/otherwise). It's a little bit like a/b/o, but not quite, and I personally enjoy it even more. I hope you will as well.

The rest of it will make sense as the story goes on!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Achilles,
Patroclus' love would have made you immortal anyway.

Fly into the sun,
defy anyone who tells you that you cannot love Him.

The ocean will break your fall;
even if it is by drowning you.

(You knew he would burn you,
Icarus,
you simply thought he was worth the risk.)

Thirty-five percent of all human beings are biologically programmed as a Dominant. Twenty-five percent are their counterparts, Submissives. The remaining forty percent of human kind is left with no dynamic at all.

Hannibal has always prided himself on standing out. He is so much better than the useless pigs who roam this world. He does not once hesitate to show this. With his education, sharp barbs and well-received papers. Through his style, rarely seen in anything but a three-piece suit. With his skills, be it in his own name or a pseudonym.

His dynamic is the only area where Hannibal is displeased to be part of the coveted minority.

Although both Doms and Subs can and do maintain happy relationships with non-dynamics, there is something undeniably *more* about a Dom/Sub relationship.

Hannibal has long since decided this is the one area in his life he'd gladly do without the *more*.

The doctor is very aware of how others perceive him. How he can influence that. A different person suit for every occasion.

The kind mentor, with a wise smile who answers questions unasked. The esteemed member of Baltimore's upper-class, a confident gait matched with a mild but captivating voice, always the centre of attention.

The Dominant, with his chin held up high and his shoulders squared, meeting people's eyes like it is his birthright. A calm but commandeering presence to which people like to throw themselves at his feet.

Hannibal has decided he is displeased with his status as a Submissive. Therefore, it has become a problem. And all problems have solutions.

Passing himself off as a Dominant is far easier than he feared. People expect it, accept it. There is everything to win, and nothing to lose.

There is not a single human being on this earth worthy enough to even consider submitting himself to. They are beneath him; they do not dare to dream to stand beside him, never mind above him. The very idea is preposterous.

In his forty-four years of walking this earth, Hannibal has never had a single reason to doubt that. No person, nor event, nor experience to cause him even the slightest inclination to doubt this claim.

That is, until he meets Will Graham.

Because as Will fires the gun again, and again, and again;

as the bullets pierce Garret Jacob Hobbs and blood splatters on the floor around them;

as the young daughter falls to the ground, trembling, a look on her face that is not surprise;

as Will stands there for an eternal second, watching Garret Jacob Hobbs die;

all Hannibal wants to do is fall on his knees and bare his neck.

Press his head against Will's thighs and wait to be given an order, quiet and peaceful like Hannibal never allows himself to be.

The urge is sudden and intense. It fills his bones and blood and travels through every cell of his body. Before Hannibal fully realizes what the feeling tugging inside of his chest means, it has already invaded his whole being. His knees tremble and only his iron will prevents him from kneeling on the blood-soaked floor right this second.

So Hannibal does the only thing he can.

He freezes.

Will is seemingly unaware of the crisis he has just unlocked within Hannibal. All his focus is on Garett Jacob Hobbs, on the dying girl. Hannibal does not confirm this suspicion with a glance. He's not sure he's even able to look Will in the eyes right now.

The moment passes. Hannibal can move again.

The next moment, Hobbs is dead.

The daughter falls to the ground, gurgling. Will is next to her in a second, trembling hands grasping clumsily at a delicate neck.

Hannibal sees himself kneeling next to Will as if he is watching someone else perform the motions – slowly, casually, betraying not one inch of what is currently raging within him. His hands are calm and steady as they replace Will's on Abigail's neck, and out of the corner of his eye Hannibal notices how looks at him with hopeful gratitude. Hannibal doesn't return the look with a calm and confident one, as he would otherwise. He still doesn't think he can raise his eyes even if he wanted to.

(He does not want to.)

This is the second time Will Graham surprises him.

Hannibal prays it is the last.

When Hannibal first meets Will Graham, his first thought is that he is a Sub.

Fidgety, tense, avoiding eye-contact. Then Hannibal cocks his head; takes in the line of Will's shoulders, hunched but tight, the way his hands clench as he speaks to Jack, how he does not hesitate to reply to Hannibal's taunt.

A non-dynamic. Then; an empathy disorder.

How very interesting.

It is only later, when Will has left Jack's office in a huff and Hannibal officially consents to help the FBI on their investigation – his pleasant demeanour betraying nothing of the amusement and anticipation swirling around in his mind – that Jack shakes his hand with a smile and reveals that Hannibal his insight was wrong.

This is the first time Will Graham surprises him.

"Thank you for working with Will," Jack says with a brisk smile, a Dom used to getting his way, "he can be difficult to work with."

Hannibal inclines his head. "I am not one to shy away from unique personalities."

Jack laughs good-naturedly. "Good, good. Because Will is certainly unique. As an investigator and a Dom, both."

Hannibal's eyebrow raises. "Will is a Dominant?"

Jack nods. "He is, though not a very," he pauses, searching for the right words, "*dominant* one, ironically. He's often mistaken for a non-dynamic, the same way I think you are often mistaken for a Dom."

Hannibal's mouth twitches downwards. Jack Crawford has, as Hannibal suspected, access to his files, and is not afraid to use that knowledge.

Though displeasing, it is unavoidable. While Hannibal has been very careful to hide his true dynamic ever since he was a child, it is impossible to fake being a Dom. He cannot give Commands infused with Dominance as Doms can, so he has had to settle for legally claiming to be a non-dynamic.

Not that Hannibal has ever presented himself as anything less than the most powerful man in the room. And there are very little situations in the day-to-day life where someone would be forced to use their Command – on the contrary, it has been strictly regulated everywhere except the bedroom and law enforcement for almost three decades, now.

Hannibal supposes it has its uses. Known as a Dom to most, only his 'closest' acquaintances know his 'true' lack of dynamic.

All in all, it may be prudent for Jack to underestimate him like this. Keep your enemies close, or so they say.

"Which is something I do not often care to correct," he responds to Jack with a smile inviting the other to share the secret. To form a pact of two as the first seedlings of friendship are sown, to surely flourish afterwards. Jack smiles back.

"Though I do have to ask, do you know if Will has any kind of partner in his life, romantic or otherwise?"

Jack shakes his head with a frown. "No. Will is alone, as far as I know. He has dogs, but that's it. He's not a very social one. Which is why I am starting to become a little concerned about him. I need him to make it out of those crime scenes in one piece."

Will Graham is turning out to be even more interesting than Hannibal first thought.

"Don't worry Jack," Hannibal says with a benevolent smile, "I will endeavour to take good care of him."

Will looks strangely at home in the grandness of Hannibal's office. It has only been three days since this unique profiler killed a man and sent Hannibal's unshaken convictions rocking to their core.

Three days has been more than enough for Hannibal to rebuild and re-armour himself against the likes of Will Graham.

It will not happen again. Hannibal will make sure of it.

“Did you just rubber-stamp me?”

Hannibal smiles. “Yes. Jack Crawford may lay his weary head to rest knowing he didn’t break you, and our conversation can proceed unobstructed by paperwork.”

After not-so-subtly implying their shared responsibility towards Abigail, a pawn on the board who may turn into a queen yet one day, the elusive profiler finally makes his way back down from the mezzanine.

The Dom has not stood still for a single moment.

“Do you feel uneasy in my office, Will?” Hannibal asks.

Will shrugs. Studies the garden through the window. “It’s a very different environment than what I’m used to.”

“Could you describe your home to me?”

Will turns his head. His eyes flicker towards Hannibal’s face, only to stop at his tie. “Simple. Practical. Warm.” *The opposite of whatever this place is*. Will does not need to say it out loud for Hannibal to hear it.

Hannibal’s lips quirk upward without his permission. How beautifully brisk this man can be. “How many dogs do you have, Will?”

Will’s forehead creases in a frown.

“I could count at least three different kinds of dog hair on your coat,” Hannibal elaborates.

The frown smoothes out. “Seven. They’re all strays. Or used to be.”

Eyes on the defensive hunch of Will’s shoulders, Hannibal decides to leave the stray comment for later, instead asking about something he could not help to be curious about.

“No other partner in your home or life? Sexual or otherwise?”

“No.” Short and abrasive. The opposite of inviting. If only Hannibal is so easily deterred.

“Having a pack of dogs must soothe your Dominant instincts at least a little,” which is a scientifically proven fact, “though it is nothing like putting another human being under. May I ask why you have decided to not seek a partner until now?”

For a moment, it seems like Will won’t answer. Hannibal lets the silence stretch. Not even Will can bear it forever.

“What makes you think this is my own choice?”

A feeling of triumph in his chest. “I imagine there are plenty of people out there willing. Aesthetically pleasing, highly educated, successful career. Subs are attracted to these kinds of

things," he muses, as if Submissives are a near-extinct breed, "and there are plenty of submissively inclined non-dynamics around who I imagine would not decline such an offer."

Will's eyes fly to Hannibal's. The moment their eyes meet, Hannibal feels a strange kind of thrill wash over him.

"Hm," Will responds neutrally, before sighing and putting his hands in his pockets. "I'm not much of a traditional Dom, and not everybody is interested in that." Hannibal is about to ask him to elaborate when Will opens his mouth once more.

"Besides, I have not met anyone worthy enough of my worship yet."

Hannibal's pupils dilate. Not *once* in his many years as an psychiatrist and doctor alike has he heard a Dominant describe their own dynamic in such a submissive way.

Reverent.

Like Hannibal would want to be treated.

Will's eyes widen and rise to meet Hannibal's. There is colour on his face, shyness creeping into his eyes yet his chin juts up proudly. Will is surprised at himself, the strangeness he has just revealed, yet he is trying to hide his insecurity at this.

And somehow, once again, Hannibal feels the urge to *submit* lurch violently inside of himself.

Seeing Will bare his inner self so bravely in front of him, Hannibal wants nothing more than to be on his knees besides his Dom, letting Will run a hand through his hair. Assuring his doubts, reaffirming he is not alone, confirming that Will is the one Hannibal has chosen to worship.

Will's pupils dilate in return.

All of Hannibal's walls snap shut within an instant. Whatever expression is on his face disappears, hidden behind complete blankness. The feeling is locked away in the deepest vestiges of his mind palace to examine and exterminate later, thoughts ripped apart as soon as they start to form.

"An unbound Dom without any outlet for his or her urges can become unstable," Hannibal says as he turns around to shuffle uselessly though the papers on his desk, "especially at your age."

The barb has its intended effect. "What," Will says aggressively, defensively, though there is not an inch of Dominance in his voice, "are you implying I just need to find a pretty Sub and fuck the trauma out of me?"

Despite himself, Hannibal feels the ghost of a smile play on his lips. He turns around once more, meeting Will's gaze – surprisingly, still on him – and staring the other down. There is not a single moment he can show weakness.

“It does not hurt to try.”

“Please,” Will barks out a laugh without humour in it, “that’s just pedestrian. *Boring*. You were supposed to be better than that, Dr. Lecter.”

Hannibal flashes his teeth. “I will endeavour to be more interesting to you, then” he adds, referencing their earlier conversation.

Will is still holding his gaze. “I’m sure you will,” he says.

Somehow, Hannibal is not sure he has won this round.

It is a novel experience.

As Will Graham surprises him for the third time, Hannibal cannot find it within himself to regret it.

“I heard what happened with Garret Jacob Hobbs.”

Will raises his head from where he is bent over his notes to meet the welcome sight of Alana Bloom walking towards him.

His classroom with the door open is apparently public enough for them to be in the room alone together, he notes with a wry smile.

Still, Will cannot help but smile. Alana is kind, pretty, and even though she is a Sub she is not afraid to stand up for herself or others. Even against a more domineering Dom like Jack.

“How are you doing, Will?” Alana says as she stops a respectful distance away from him.

Will shrugs. “As well as I can be, considering.” He winces a little. Considering what? The nightmares? The insomnia? The ever-present and ever-suppressed need to seek someone out who will accept him, kneel for him, and worship them with everything he has?

The fact that the face of Garret Jacob Hobbs is haunting him in his dreams?

Please. Who’d want a Dom like him.

“I heard Hannibal cleared you for field work,” Alana says gently with a strange kind of smile playing on her lips.

Will’s eyes trail along her lips, her shoulders, back to his papers. “You are familiar with Dr. Lecter?”

Alana nods, and when Will’s eyes flicker upwards he can see the admiration in the tilt of her head.

“He was my mentor at John Hopkins. I have a lot of respect and admiration for him,” she says, and *oh*, Will thinks. How ironic.

“He’s an interesting man,” Will says, then adds deliberately, “very sure of himself. Confident.”

Alana nods, then looks around at the empty classroom and leans closer. “I know you don’t like your fellow Doms much,” as if it’s not an understatement, “but I’ll tell you a secret about Hannibal. I’m sure Jack knows, so it won’t be strange if you do as well, though Hannibal does not like the knowledge flaunted. He only told me well into my second year of my residency.”

Will’s eyebrows rise high.

“He’s actually a non-dynamic,” Alana says lowly.

At Will’s expression, she adds, “I know! At first, I didn’t believe it myself. Hannibal is always so in control. I like to joke that Mother Nature must have made a mistake,” she says with a conspiratorial smile. “But it suits him. He is very kind.”

“I’m sure he is,” Will says neutrally.

Alana straightens and clears her throat. “Anyway, I’m sure Jack won’t hesitate to call in Hannibal’s assistance more often now that he’s gotten him to tag along once. Jack’s persistent like that.”

Will nods. “Yeah, yeah he is. Speaking of Jack,” he says as the man himself walks into the classroom.

“Will, Alana,” Jack greets the both of them and immediately gets down to business.

“Will. There’s something I need for you to see.”

The garden is strangely beautiful.

The scene had been otherworldly, the peacefulness prevalent so deep in the woods mixing with the grotesqueness of the mushrooms made out of corpses.

As Will enters the morgue he hears Zeller and Price arguing with each other, the two non-dynamics always at each other’s throat. If you asked Will, they would be better off working of that tension in a more productive manner.

Alas, nobody ever asks.

As Will shares a smile with Beverly, the female Dom always good-natured and not inclined to showing off, he knows he is not the only one who thinks so.

Zeller starts to explain the forensic team’s findings to Will and Jack as Price points out the different areas of the bodies. Will takes the time handing everyone their coffee, getting grateful smiles in return. The line of Jack’s shoulders relaxes slightly, which is good for everyone.

When Zeller and Price are done, Jack turns to Will.

“What do you think?” Jack asks tensely, his voice only barely tipping the line of socially acceptable Dominance. Will holds back a frown.

He’s glad he was able to talk this through with Dr. Lecter.

“It’s a man,” Will starts, thinking back on what he’s deduced from the scene and the evidence here, “a Dominant. He’s seeking connection, but he cannot find it, not even with a Sub. And what he can find is not good enough for him, not what he needs. He’s jealous of those who can connect, which is why his victims are both Dominants and Submissives.”

Thinking back on the sea of dark green and brown, moss-covered fungus the centre of the tableaux, Will breathes out slowly. “It’s about connection. He started connecting humans in another way.”

“The mushrooms are about connecting the victims?” Jack frowns, disturbed.

Will bites his lip. “He thinks he’s helping them. Giving them the one thing we all want: companionship.”

“So he’s looking for companionship,” Beverly concludes. “The perp’s lonely. He wants someone to see him.”

Will thinks back to Hannibal, just a few hours earlier, sitting opposite one another in the fancy chairs. Bent towards the other, vines curving towards sunlight that emerges from where they meet.

“Don’t we all?”

As Hannibal goes about his week, there is a strange longing within him.

There are a wide variety of Doms and Subs in the world who chose to represent themselves in a variety of ways. A different flavour for each couple, for each person.

Hannibal’s eyes stray where they did not do so before.

He attends a guest lecture on hypnotherapy. Instead of focusing on the – admittedly mediocre – lecturer, his eyes trail off to the side. The Sub is sitting peacefully next to the lectern, eyes closed and collar heavy on her throat. Hannibal wants to feel disgust or repulsion about such a public spectacle, but somehow it is clearer than ever to see how happy the woman is, sitting there and listening to her Dom speak. She does not move a single muscle for the entire forty-five minutes. When the lecture is done, the Dom strokes his hand through her hair, murmurs words of praise. The happy sigh she gives follows Hannibal out of the lecture room.

At the fromagerie, as Hannibal lingers over the cheeses, a man walks by with a slim but elegant blue collar adorning his neck. He gives his order demurely, smiles as the cashier teases him about behaving good-naturedly, and nods politely at Hannibal as he leaves. The sight of him makes Hannibal’s throat feel bare.

He leaves the shop agitated, not trusting himself to be as polite as usual, and decides to take a calming walk through the local park.

A mistake. It is even worse here. Hannibal does not usually pay the people around him even the slightest bit of attention. Today, it seems his eyes are drawn to them unwillingly.

He passes a pair of women, one sitting on the bench reading a newspaper, the other folded up like a footchair underneath her. As he passes by, his sensitive ears pick up the Sub's soft Whine, the mirror of a Dominant's Command. The Dom immediately jumps into action, hand moving reassuringly to the back of her neck, and the Sub settles. Hannibal forces himself to not react.

A couple walking by, holding hands, one collared, one not. Hannibal clenches his own hands and feels only air.

A small and pretty man, leading his large and muscular partner on a leash. The crowd gives both of them space and the proud slant of the shorter man's mouth makes Hannibal's chest ache with longing.

The Dom's eyes are full of pride. The colour reminds him of Will.

Hannibal decides this is enough. One last trip and he'll call it a day. Maybe he'll get his rarely-used handcuffs out to use them on himself as he resolutely does not think of Will.

Tilting his chin up with and steeling his gaze in such a way it makes a Sub passing him by blush, Hannibal makes his way to his final destination.

Sometimes, it seemed to Hannibal that whomever is up or down there looking at him, they must like him very much.

Because as Hannibal stands in line at the pharmacy for his once-a-month restocking of (a part of) the array of chemicals he keeps in his office, he looks through the reflective surface of the empty television screen at the cameras visible from behind the counter at notices something peculiar.

There are several armed SWAT-members currently entering the building.

It does not take long to connect the dots. Apparently the FBI – Will, he corrects himself – finally realized the diabetic connection. One of these good pharmacists behind the counter might not be as good as they pretend to be.

And, judging by the nervous twitch of one E. Stammets' eye, it must be the very same pharmacist currently helping the young woman in front of him.

Hannibal finds himself faced with a choice.

He could do nothing, in which case this E. Stammets' will likely notice the approaching SWAT team in time and escape, temporarily if not permanently. The man has such an

interesting mindset, and on some level Hannibal will be saddened to see such a promising young mind be put down so soon.

He could intervene, in which case the SWAT-team will be there in time. In this crowded room, it's likely Stammets will have the chance to take a hostage with the gun he hid poorly under his lab jacket, which will create the most interesting situation.

It's extremely likely Jack and Will have accompanied the SWAT team inside the building. Jack would never let his own manhunt end without him, and Will must either be dragged along or too curious not to be there.

Which means he could see Will handle another volatile situation.

Hannibal makes his decision.

"Excuse me," he says just as the woman in front of him starts signing for the package, "if I may be so bold as to interrupt?"

Stammets and the blonde woman turn to him simultaneously, and Hannibal puts on his most dashing smile for them both. The woman is instantly charmed. A Sub, Hannibal notes distantly. Uncollared.

"I am a licenced doctor myself, though I do not practice at the current time," Hannibal says slowly, buying as much time as possible. "My eye could not help but fall upon your prescription, madame. Professional curiosity, as you hopefully understand."

Stammets gives Hannibal a suspicious look, but the woman tucks a strand of hair behind her ear, giving Hannibal a shy and charming smile.

"What about it, sir?" she asks.

"Well," Hannibal continues, counting the seconds and readying himself, "I was wondering if either of you have any opinions or insights to share about the recent development of-"

Luckily, he is saved from inventing a new medicine for diabetics by the harsh shout of the SWAT-team behind him.

Hannibal takes a moment to reflect on the irony of being in a position to feel glad about the FBI invading the building.

"***Freeze!***"

The Dominant command washes over the group. Immediately, most people freeze. The Sub woman in front of Hannibal locks up completely. All around him people either freeze or fly into action as the SWAT-team steps into view.

Hannibal ignores the moderately powerful command with the ease of many years of practice, instead choosing to take several steps backwards, angling himself so he can see both Stammets and where he estimates Jack and Will shall approach from.

In front of him, Stammets reacts swiftly and beautifully.

The frozen woman is now trembling with fear as Stammets holds a gun against her head, baring his teeth at the onlookers. He's not cowed by the command at all. It takes a truly strong Dominant to Command other Doms, and whichever of the FBI's puppets just tried to, they did not succeed.

The woman is dragged awkwardly over the counter, bent backwards like a puppet, eyes wide and watering. Stammets is taking cover behind the counter, his movement limited, but his sides covered by the walls.

The scared Sub Whined.

A Whine, unlike a Dominant Command, is not something used consciously. It is a natural reaction of a Sub that feels in true danger, the counterweight to a Command. Impossible to fake. A Whine calls upon any Dom in the area to *protect, provide, reassure*. It's a tough pull to resist, even for non-dynamics or fellow Submissives.

(Hannibal has never had any difficulties ignoring others' Whines.)

In front of him, Stammets clenches his teeth. The hand holding the gun trembles, then steadies once more. *Truly a interesting man*, Hannibal thinks with amusement. A Dom resisting a Whine is no mean feat. Pity this man will probably be dead or captured soon. Hannibal wonders if the feeling of disconnection Stammets must feel is influencing his mental fortitude.

"Hannibal!"

Hannibal turns his head slightly, keeping Stammets and the woman within view as the other main players enter the stage.

Will looks like a different person.

His expression is cold and set in stone. His eyes are hard and glinting like the purest of obsidian, dark and intense, pupils dilating with adrenaline as they take in the scene in front of them.

Will zeroes in on Hannibal immediately, calling out his name soon after. Some buried instinct within Hannibal wants to preen at that, being prioritized above all, but does not have a chance to bubble up. It is clamped away between thick walls as Hannibal clads himself in careful self-control the moment he takes the decision to intervene.

Jack, meanwhile, is holding a gun in one hand, pointing to the ground. His teeth are bared in an angry grimace as he and Will walk forward to the front of the stage.

"***Don't come any closer***," Stammets snarls, but his command is weak. The release of the safety mechanism so close to the woman's head, however, enforces it, and both Jack and Will obey.

The SWAT-team around them have their guns trained on Stammets, but Hannibal notes that none of them possess sniper rifles or any kind of finesse weapon. They will not be able to take the shot like this.

Such a shame.

“Lay down your weapon and let the woman go,” Jack says evenly, following protocol even in a tense situation. Commendable. Also polite.

Stammets does not move.

Jack takes a deep breath, shoulders tightening, spine drawing straight. Hannibal mentally braces himself. *What an excellent opportunity to test Jack’s mettle*, he thinks fleetingly, and once more thanks whichever deity is watching over him.

“***Drop the weapon.***”

Jack’s command is strong. It is, like all other Dominant commands, best compared sledgehammer battering against Hannibal’s shields. It is an arrow coated in sweet poison, whispering to him *let it go, let me in* as it tried to pierce his walls. The sweetness did nothing to take away from its lethality. It is a force pressing in all around him, trying to invade his mind and soul rather than his body, testing muscles that do not even exist in the physical plane.

It’s not enough to break the tall and sturdy walls of Hannibal’s mind.

The doctor’s hands do not twitch. Not a single muscle on his body moves, and Hannibal feels satisfaction and pride flood him.

Jack is strong, stronger than most, though not the strongest Hannibal has ever resisted. If worst comes to worst, there is nothing to fear on that front.

Stammets grits his teeth, the muscles in his jaw working, and for one moment Hannibal laments the fact that this play would have such a banal ending. But the killer straightens his shoulders once more.

“If you do that again, I’ll kill her,” he threatened, though there is no true bite in it. He will be gunned down the moment he does so, and Stammets is aware of that.

Still, there’s little the FBI could do as long as he has a hostage.

A stalemate. Who would break first?

Someone takes a step forward from the corner of his eye. Hannibal’s heart speeds up as he finally sees Will make a move.

What will you do, he muses. He estimates Will will use his empathy, to bargain. It’s a smart move. Maybe Will will even pull out his gun and end Stammets right there – though one can only hope.

“I know what you’re looking for, Eldon,” Will begins softly, sympathetically. Almost submissively, though there is a touch of confidence that made the words more parental.

Such a fascinating approach. Such a fascinating man.

Hannibal wants to tear Will apart cell by cell, until he understands him completely; then glue him back together with his own hands until it was impossible to say where Will began and Hannibal’s influence ended.

Stammets’ eyes meet Will’s.

Hannibal holds his breath.

“You’re looking for connection,” Will continues, taking another step forward, “for someone to see you.”

“Yes,” Stammets breathes, eyes widening, “yes. You see. You *know*. I knew you would understand, Will Graham.”

Will smiles. It looks benign. Hannibal can see the darkness hidden behind it. He feels it creep forward, as if embracing him, and it makes his heart beat faster.

“I do,” Will says kindly, “I see.”

“You do,” Stammets whispers.

“You know what to do now,” Will continues, almost hypnotic, and it’s like the entire room holds its breath.

“I do?” Stammets responds, and for the first time, he sounds uncertain.

Will hums benevolently. When he opens his mouth, it is nothing like an enemy commanding an opponent to yield, or a master demanding a slave to obey; it is a friend, a loved one, holding your hand, guiding you. Intimate.

“Now,” Will says, “you will ***kneel***.”

It spreads through the crowd like a shockwave.

Will’s voice is kind, and firm, and *commanding*. It’s different than the sledgehammers all other Dominants wield – instead of force, Will’s command comes from a very different place. Not an arrow, but a gentle breeze, a wave of soothing warmth. *Let me take care of you*, it says, *I know what you need. I will make sure you get it*.

It is soft, and warm, and it is everything Hannibal is absolutely, wildly, completely unprepared for.

Will opens his mouth, issues his Command, and Hannibal, who has spent forty-four years defying his dynamic, who has never once in his life followed *anyone’s* commands-

falls

to

his

knees.

The rush of instant gratification nearly overwhelms him. Hannibal has to choke back a needy sound at the warmth and endorphins flooding his system, the reward divine after restraining himself for so long.

He forces his eyes shut. All of his self-control is focused upon not showing anything outwardly, giving them *nothing* but the fact that he has followed the command – *he has followed the command* – keeping his face neutral and his back straight and his hands closed in a fist. The picture of a non-dynamic trying (*and failing*) to resist a Dominant command.

He is barely aware of what is going on around him. Later, Hannibal realizes that literally everyone had fallen to their knees at Will's command, including Stammets himself. A neat solution; the countertop cleanly separating Stammets and his hostage. The only ones left standing are Will, Jack – with shaking knees he will never admit to – and two out of the ten Dominant SWAT members with admirable restraint. One of them even had the presence of mind to move forward and secure the hostage.

Hannibal hadn't even been the first to hit the ground, nor the first non-Submissive; but at this moment, Hannibal registers nothing of that.

The only thing he knows is that even with his back turned, Will's eyes are on him.

"Damn, Graham. Didn't know you had it in you."

Sergeant Wells, one of the officers Will is at least passingly familiar with, approaches the three of them from where they are watching the police car containing Stammets drive away.

Will does not turn to acknowledge the officer, preferring to keep his eyes on the retreating car. He is far too aware of Hannibal standing still and tense next to him.

"I've chosen him for a reason," Jack responds as Will remains silent, clapping Will on the back jovially. Will mentally rolls his eyes.

Wells enthusiastically agrees. As a non-dynamic, he's clearly not embarrassed to be one of the first officers on the floor after Will had issued his Command.

On his other side, Hannibal is silent, watching the retreating car with the same intensity he normally watches Will with.

Will bites his lip.

Only after Wells wanders off does Will turn around. Hannibal unconsciously mirrors his movement. The empath does his best to not react.

“Really though, Will,” Jack says lowly as soon as the officer leaves hearing range, “why did you not tell me you could issue such strong Commands? That is an important asset in any kind of case!”

Will takes a deep breath to calm himself, gathers his courage, and slowly raises his eyes to meet Jack’s. “I don’t want to be abused that way.”

Jack’s eyebrows raise. Surprisingly, it is Hannibal who speaks up first.

“Abused?” When Will turns to meet Hannibal’s eyes, the doctor’s gaze is like fire. Will quickly moves his focus to Hannibal’s shoulder instead. “That is a very loaded word. Extreme. It indicates unwilling violence towards the originator or the recipient both.”

Will’s gaze shifts to the Hannibal’s feet. He has really nice shoes. “It is. I don’t like using commands without mutual consent. Of me and them both. I don’t *want* to *force* anybody to do anything. That’s not what being a Dominant is about, no matter what ninety-five percent of my stupid dynamic would tell you.”

Jack frowns in confusion but Hannibal only inches closer. Will swallows thickly and ignores the instinct to draw Hannibal even closer, straight into his arms, engulfing him-

“For the recipient, you feel like you are abusing someone when you use your Command on them without first obtaining informed consent. And as the originator,” and here Hannibal cocks his head ever so slightly, “you feel abused when you have to use your Dominance on someone you have not explicitly chosen to do such a thing with.”

I have not met anyone worthy enough of my worship yet, echoes unspoken between them.

Will shrugs. Nods. Looks away, pulling a hand through his hair.

Hannibal is always better at putting things into words than Will is. If only the doctor could give words to his own desires…

“The important thing is, you don’t want to be used as a common goon because of the strength of your Command,” Jack summarizes, both getting and missing the point entirely. “I can respect that. However, if you ever land yourself in similar situations somehow in the future, I expect for you to not hesitate to use your Dominance again.”

Will sighs deeply. “If there are lives at stake, I will not hesitate to do everything I need to do to save them.”

Jack nods, satisfied, and leaves the two of them alone.

Both Hannibal and Will are silent for a moment, both watching the other. Hannibal tries to catch Will’s eyes, expression once again inscrutable. Will watches the line of Hannibal’s jaw. He’s doing his best to not let his gaze fall on thin lips.

“I’m sorry you had to be here tonight,” Will eventually manages.

“A mere coincidence. It could have been anyone. I emerge on the other side unharmed and an experience richer, so I consider myself a lucky man.”

Will frowns, then looks away, biting his lip. “Only a few seconds later and it might have been you as a hostage, instead of her. I don’t,” he pauses, “I wouldn’t…”

The profiler trails off. Will’s eyes are almost instinctively drawn to Hannibal’s face, trailing his chin, the man’s intense maroon eyes still focused on him.

“I feel like I’ve dragged you into my world.”

“No,” Hannibal states confidently, “I got here on my own.”

Somehow, that statement makes it easy for Will to meet Hannibal’s steady gaze. He feels a warmth within him, a longing, unfamiliar yet welcome.

“You did, didn’t you,” Will muses. “And I’m sure you appreciate the company.”

Hannibal looks away first.

Chapter End Notes

REVISED 31/8/2021. The verb tenses make sense now.
Kudos and comments give me life!

my soul is bare upon the step

Chapter Notes

this chapter is early have a treat

the reason for that is the fact that this story is now beta'd! never thought i'd see the day. damn.

thank jonnimir for the better grammar like god bless them

See the end of the chapter for more notes

you'd been betrothed to lunacy;
oh, but siren of the bourn,
how the madman adored you,
and how he loved you still.

The following week finds them in his office once again.

"It's not the Chesapeake Ripper," Will says, and the conviction in his words makes Hannibal tilt his head in consideration.

"The theatricality of it all is not unlike him," Hannibal argues, although it's really not. If he had punished the mediocre trombone player, this would not have been the vision he would have chosen to execute.

But Hannibal can admit he admires the other killer's attempt at artistry.

Emphasis on attempt.

"No," Will is saying, "it just… doesn't feel right." When Hannibal does not say anything, Will elaborates, fidgeting. "The Chesapeake Ripper's scenes have an underlying sense of," twitching fingers, "*elegance*. Of purpose. Not necessarily in the chosen victim, but in the tableaux." Hannibal breathes in through his nose.

"He *elevates* them," Will says, turning around and missing the look of captivation on Hannibal's face. "He makes them more than they were in life, he-"

Will cuts himself off, as if suddenly aware of his own words. Hannibal lets his breath go.

"It sounds like you admire him."

"Maybe I do."

Hannibal suppresses a smile. “How else would you describe the Ripper?”

“Precise. Patient. Confident. Creative. He is very sure about who he is.”

“Ever entertained the thought the Ripper is a she?”

Will nods. “In the beginning, yes. But it’s a he. Aside from the way the cuts are made, it’s the feel of the scene, the way he portrays his victims. I am sure it is a man.”

“Does Jack agree with your profile?”

“Most of it.”

Hannibal cocks his head ever so slightly. “Oh?”

Will’s eyes flicker towards Hannibal’s for just a moment. They are clouded.

“Jack is convinced the Ripper is a Dominant.”

Hannibal stills. “You disagree?”

“It’s recent. More of a feeling.”

Hannibal’s chest tightens just a little. He says nothing.

“There is, in the end, nothing that really speaks for either dynamic in the Ripper’s work. It is as if the Ripper has distanced himself from his dynamic, as if it is not a part of the world he lives in – or at least, he wishes it was like that.”

Will is still pacing in front of the windows of his office. The afternoon sun caresses the strands of his hair, a halo of blonde around a sea of soft brown.

“That impression leads me to believe the Ripper is not a Dom. If he was, I think he would flaunt it. So either the Ripper is a non-dynamic,” and here Will’s eyes raise until they meet Hannibal’s, “or he is a Submissive who hides it.”

For the first time since he had met his aunt Murasaki’s eyes when he was just a boy, Hannibal feels flayed open.

It is uncomfortable. It is exciting. It makes him want to bare his neck, and he takes a moment to pluck the thought out of his own mind. Examines it carefully, the pride mixed with an certain kind of eagerness that sits behind it.

Will is the first person since Murasaki to even come close to seeing the darker vestiges of his soul. Hannibal wants to pluck out his eyes and look through them at his own reflection in the mirror, so that he may understand himself even more.

“It’s an interesting theory,” Hannibal says, just the right mix of sceptical and interested. “I haven’t heard this idea from you before,” he adds neutrally, taking a step closer to his desk, scalpel within easy reach.

Will smiles wryly. Hannibal wants to trace the curve of it with his lips.

“You don’t think Jack is open to the possibility?”

“Not really. I’ve been thinking of convincing him of the possibility of the non-dynamic angle first, before anything else. It’s statistically more likely, anyway.”

“I am of the opinion Jack should always take your insights into great consideration.” Hannibal says evenly, taking a step away from his desk, chest unclenching.

“Tell that to him,” Will mutters. Sighs.

“I used to think the Ripper was a Dom as well, in the beginning. Most killers are Dominants, as you know. Doms are more aggressive, easier provoked into rash action, and their Command is a useful tool when wanting to do someone harm.”

“You don’t seem to hold your own dynamic in high regard,” Hannibal observes quietly.

“I don’t,” Will answers easily, and Hannibal cannot help but trace the outline of Will’s clenched fists with his eyes. From the side, Will’s profile is even more striking. “Most Doms are arrogant. Overconfident. They think the world should bow to them, and moreover, they think that any Sub or non-dynamic they choose to Dominate should literally fall onto their knees in reverence. That they are better than them. That’s not-” Will cuts himself off, visibly frustrated.

Hannibal feels his heart start to quicken against his will. “You don’t agree?”

Will shakes his head, pacing in front of Hannibal’s windows. “I don’t. You know I don’t. It’s a Dominant’s duty, their privilege, to care for their partner, Submissive or otherwise. To be worthy enough to provide for their partner’s needs.”

“And it is the privilege of the Submissive to be worthy enough to be cared for,” Hannibal adds, thinking back on Will’s words all those weeks ago, when he first met Will in his office.

“Have you ever found someone worthy?” Hannibal asks brazenly.

Will’s shoulders are squared. He turns around. Meets Hannibal’s gaze.

“Have you?”

Neither of them answer the question.

Hannibal has never been in a serious relationship.

He has had affairs. A few brief flings barely worthy of the name. A few women, a few men. Never Dominants. Hannibal is not fool enough to tempt fate.

Non-dynamics, a few Submissives who had been let in on his ‘secret’ as to not expect too much. It was physically enjoyable, not much else. Something to pass the time.

Another row of stitches in his person suit.

(It did not change the flavour of the meat.)

Hannibal has never been in a serious relationship. He has never wanted to be.

Yet, he sits behind his desk after Will has left his office, the profiler's smell still prominent in the closed space.

Closes his eyes.

Thinks.

When Hannibal is called to discuss the Maestro, as they're calling him, he is only too happy to go. Not only will it provide him with another opportunity to see Will in action, there is also the base amount of derogatory amusement he always gets whenever the FBI lets him into the base of their operations.

When he walks into the autopsy room, they are only missing Jack and Will. Zeller and Price are squabbling about something or another, and Beverly, the most tolerable of the three, is patiently waiting, smiling at him as he enters.

"Good afternoon, Dr. Lecter," she greets him, "exited about looking at some dead bodies?"

He gives her a friendly nod in return and raises his chin precisely an inch higher than hers. "What better way to spend my afternoon?" he replies in what she takes as a joke.

Jack pushes through the doors next, nodding at all of them and looking around with a frown. "Where's Will?" he asks, and though Hannibal is wondering the same thing, it makes his hackles rise. Will is not Jack's to command.

Barely ten seconds later the door opens slowly to reveal the man himself. Will is holding a tray of cups, to which the entire team brightens up immediately.

Hannibal frowns internally.

"Went by the teacher's lounge on the way down," Will greets them, eyes on Jack's shoulder as he holds out one of the cups. "We probably all need it."

"You're a godsend, Will," Jack says with relief as he chucks back the cup of coffee in one go. The stressed-out frown almost habitually present on the Dom's face soothes out, if just for a few minutes.

Though Will is not a social butterfly by far, it appears he is quite good at anticipating the needs of people around them and fulfilling them.

This is not the first time this has happened, Hannibal observes silently. Beverly admits how pleased she is that he got her order right again, to which Will only smiles. Zeller and Price are mid-discussion and only give Will a quick thanks, a habit. Will does not seem deterred.

Hannibal cannot help the way his mouth curls the slightest bit in distaste as he eyes the collection of paper cups. It would be rude to decline such an offering, but dislike is a mild term to describe how he feels about the kind of coffee the FBI serves.

When Will approaches him, he holds out the cup, and Hannibal takes it with an internal sigh of defeat and a fake smile.

Then his eyebrow arches.

“I know you hate the coffee here,” Will explains softly as Hannibal looks down on the cup of water in his hand, “but I also didn’t want you to feel left out. So I hope this is okay.”

When Hannibal’s eyes raise up to meet Will, the profiler looks him square in the eye.

For a single moment, Hannibal does not know what to say.

“Thank you,” he eventually manages, and leaves it at that.

The rest of the autopsy goes much in the same way.

Will is brilliant, of course, shooting down Jack’s suggestion of the Ripper with ease, the profile coming to life before Hannibal’s eyes. Strangely, it is not what Hannibal is paying attention to the most.

When Price and Zeller describe how the vocal cords are hardened, Will praises them with a quiet “good catch.” Hannibal sees Price and Zeller preen.

When Beverly steps back from her explanation, Will pulls out a chair for her, and she sits down with a grateful smile.

As the autopsy comes to a close, and Jack’s hand tightens around his cup, Will steps forward to clap a hand on Jack’s shoulder in assurance. “We’ll catch him.”

These are little gestures, and there are still enough awkward moments as Will slips a little to far into the Maestro’s mindspace, but they paint a clear enough picture.

Somehow, Will is very attuned to what his colleagues need, and goes out of his way to care for them in his own way. Hannibal is sure most of them don’t even notice.

The most startling observation is when Hannibal finds himself thinking *but what about me*.

He doesn’t know what startles him more; the needy, *submissive* undercurrent in the thought, or the realization that Will spends every moment not actively involved in the discussion standing at Hannibal’s side.

Where, deep down, Hannibal wants him to be.

The worst thing is that it’s working.

Hannibal feels a quiet sort of contentment bubbling forth inside of him, a pleased feeling that Will is close, there for him, available for whatever Hannibal needs.

Will. A Dominant. Seeing to his needs – their needs.

Hannibal does not understand.

As the meeting comes to a close, and he follows Jack and Will back towards the main floor of the BAU, Jack claps him on the shoulder.

“A bit different than the operation table, isn’t it, Doctor?” he jokes. Hannibal realizes only then that his face is eerily blank, a shield thrown up without conscious thought as his inner cogs turn wildly.

He quickly shelves his features in an slightly embarrassed smile. “It is,” he admits, “and with that realization, my respect for your work only increases.”

Jack smiles, pleased, and bids them goodbye. Will is watching him.

“Have you any plans for lunch?”

Hannibal does not quite understand where the impulse to ask came from, but as the words leave his mouth he finds that he cannot regret them.

“Nope.”

“I am always pleased to welcome a friend to my table. Would you join me, today? I can whip something into shape, and we can discuss the case a bit more if you like.”

“Sure,” Will responds with an easy smile, and follows him into the car.

The short ride to his home is silent. This is not unusual for them, although less for Will than for Hannibal. But Hannibal is lost in thought, and even though the object of both his conflict and fascination is next to him, he does not feel ready yet to speak.

“Beef-tartare sandwiches with fresh garlic and tomatoes,” Hannibal announces politely as he places the dishes in front of them.

They are in his dining room, sitting face-to-face, the painting of Leda and the Swan watching over them. This is the first time Will has been in this room, in his home.

He does not look uncomfortable, only curious. Hannibal feels strangely pleased.

“This is good,” Will compliments him after Hannibal has watched him take the first bite, “especially for something you made so quickly.”

“A good chef is always prepared for an opportunity to show off his skills,” Hannibal agrees after taking a moment to savour his own food.

For a few minutes, the table is silent as they both eat. With most people, Hannibal would force himself to make polite conversation, even though he likes to give his full attention to the food.

Will is not most people.

The profiler does not once try to start a conversation. Hannibal is both pleased and unsettled.

When the last bite is gone, Will leans back. His eyes are expectant.

“Are you going to tell me what’s eating you?” he inquires with a wry smile. The spot of mostly unintentional humour brings a smile to Hannibal’s face, until the question itself registers.

He feels his face fall into a mask of politeness. “What do you mean, Will? Is there something you want to discuss?”

Will barely stops himself from rolling his eyes, but it is evident how much he wants to. “Come on, Dr. Lecter. I know you better than that.” Will is speaking the truth. It seems his usual mask is not enough to fool the empath, not anymore. Hannibal is not sure how to feel about that. “Something is bothering you.”

Hannibal folds his napkin away and takes a sip of wine. Places his glass down. Decides.

“I must admit, Will, that I am once again surprised at your behaviour today.”

Will arches his eyebrow, and a little bit of hurt flashes across his face. No doubt he remembers the way he once again sank into the mind of the killer. *Had to open you up to get a decent sound out of you*. “With the profiling?”

Hannibal shakes his head. “No,” he says, and is surprised to find himself wanting to reassure the other man, “not the profiling.”

The line of Hannibal’s jaw sets in resoluteness. “I meant that I am surprised at your behaviour today in the lab. For a Dominant, your actions today seemed to me more suitable for a submissive.”

It is meant to provoke, but Will only watches him steadily. “Do you mean how I bring my team coffee?”

“Not only that. You bring them motivation disguised as nourishment. Personal attention in a few careful words, reassurance and confirmation where they give you none. Rather, they treat you with suspicion born of misunderstanding, as you dive deep into the headspace of these killers.” Hannibal pauses. “I will admit I do not understand your motivations.”

The smile on Will’s lips is somehow a little sad.

“I simply want to provide for them. Take care of them. I like doing that for people I care about. In my personal opinion, a good Dominant does not only take care of his Submissive,

but of all the people in his life that he cares about. Though the Sub would take precedence, of course."

Hannibal does not move a single muscle. "Not everyone would appreciate the implied ownership."

Will shakes his head minutely. "There is no sense of ownership. Even if I had a relationship with a Sub, which I do not, they would own me just as much as I would own them. And I would want to take care of them as much as they would want to take care of me."

"An uncommon paradigm," Hannibal can only say.

Will smiles again, but this time, it is inviting. Hannibal feels a shiver going down his spine.

"I like taking care of people. And people like to be taken care of."

Forcing himself to adopt a sceptical expression, Hannibal raises his eyebrow. "Do they?"

Will suddenly leans forward, putting his elbows on the table, whole body curving forward, towards Hannibal. His gaze is uncharacteristically steady, peeling away the layers of Hannibal's person suit one by one.

"Don't you want to be taken care of, Hannibal?"

The feeling that courses through him at those words is indescribable.

Hannibal closes his eyes in resignation.

"You know," he simply says.

"I suspected strongly," Will corrects. "Very strongly, at this point."

"And I just confirmed it." Hannibal says flatly.

"You are a Submissive," Will states confidently.

A moment of silence.

"Yes," Hannibal says. Somehow, admitting that fact out loud for the first time since his teenage years in the relative safety of his aunt's embrace makes him feel elated.

He keeps his eyes closed.

"You hide it. Not because you need to, but because you want to."

"Yes," Hannibal says.

"You are ashamed of it. No," Will corrects himself, "not ashamed. That would imply that you are anything less than completely sure in yourself. But you are dissatisfied. There is no one who is your equal, never mind worthy to be your Dominant."

Hannibal is silent.

“You do a good job hiding it,” Will says, and the words are filled with so much honest approval that Hannibal feels his throat constrict. “It must be difficult, keeping yourself in check. You must have a staggering amount of self-control.”

Hannibal still does not dare to open his eyes. “I do. And it did not used to be difficult.” *Until I met you*.

The scraping of a chair. Hannibal startles, fingers flying towards the cutting knife at the table, eyes opening wide.

But Will has simply risen from his seat. He does not meet Hannibal’s eyes. Somehow, Hannibal senses it is for his benefit, instead of Will’s.

“What now?” Hannibal asks, and he hates how vulnerable he sounds. He does not know. He wants Will to step forward, grab his face with both hands, kiss him deeply. He wants to raise the knife clutched in his grip and pounce forward, sticking it deep into the profiler’s eye, killing him instantly. He wants Will to see him coming, to force him on his knees with a single word.

“Whatever you like,” Will replies evenly.

The empath swallows, the sound harsh in the silence. For the first time, Hannibal realizes how this must be for Will, how much the profiler must surely want him as well.

It should calm him, put him back in control. It’s something he can use. Instead, it only makes his stomach flutter.

“I could-” Will starts, then stops. “If I can…” a frown, and Will clears his throat.

“If you want anything from me,” Will says with forced casualness, placing Hannibal in the position of the demander, the one in control, “you need only ask. If I can provide, I will.”

The undercurrent of steel in his voice makes Hannibal want to whine.

“I think its best if you leave now,” he manages to say instead.

Will nods. “That’s okay. I’ll see myself out.”

Before Will can leave the dining room completely, Hannibal calls out. “Wait.”

Will stops. Turns. There is something in his eyes that Hannibal wants to crush into tiny little pieces and then eat one by one, savouring.

But he has to know.

“How did you know?”

Will smiles. “In your office. That first time, after Hobbs. You asked me about my dynamic; about my worship.”

Hannibal nods. Swallows.

Will’s eyes are pin-pricks of light in the chiaroscuro painting of his face.

“You deflected with aggression, but I could see the truth in your eyes. That for all your words, what you really needed in that moment was to be on your knees next to me.”

Chapter End Notes

dom will gives me life

If you like sub!hannibal come find us at discord

next chapter, our friend Tobias pays the boys a visit...

my blood suddenly knows you're gone

Chapter Summary

Tobias pays a visit, with unexpected results.

Chapter Notes

thank jonnimir for superiour readability and lack of spelling mistakes god bless them

How dangerous, he thought, to finally have something worth losing.

When Tobias comes for him, the day after Will made his offer, it is more of a surprise than it should be. Franklyn is between them. A minor pest soon snuffed out.

Tobias tries, of course, to Command him.

I just killed two men.

His right cuff is stained dark brown with dried blood.

Tobias' Dominance is strong, and Hannibal is reeling from the sudden doubt. Still, he manages to resist the Maestro's Command, and after that it is easy. A fledgeling killer cannot measure up to the Ripper.

After the deed is done, and Hannibal tips over the statue's pedestal just to be sure, he staggers over to his desk and sits down.

He's not afraid of legal consequences. It's self-defence, a Dom invading another's territory.

Even if Hannibal is not officially a Dom himself, he's sure there won't be too many questions. And somehow, Hannibal knows that even if Jack *is* suspicious, Will would trust him. Will would-

If he's not dead.

He can't be. He's not allowed to.

He better not be, or I'll kill him myself.

If he's dead, if he's dead- I'll- I'll-

Hannibal can feel himself spiral, falling as if in freefall through the five stages of grief. The wind is harsh and cold in his face, the hard ground coming up to meet him, fast.

The sirens come closer. The police burst open the door and the forensics follow in soon after. He explains the basics of what happened to the first responder, who looks very sympathetic.

"I may have a concussion," Hannibal says as the EMT checks him, who nods thoughtfully. "Probably," the woman says.

It's a convenient excuse.

It feels like it, anyhow. His head is full of cotton. His thoughts are slow, his iron control a beat behind, like a performance just off-key.

When the woman checks him for injuries, he barely manages to pass off the baring of his neck as a stretch of the shoulders. Hannibal feels detached, like he's just starting to dip his toes in the water, preparing to float away.

But there is no lifeline that tethers him to land.

He can't be dead. I don't know what I'll do if he is.

And then, just as Hannibal has started to build himself up -*I did not need him anyway, I can survive just fine on my own*- Jack walks briskly into his office.

Will Graham is hot on his heels.

Hannibal immediately meets the Dom's eyes. Will's eyes are hard – scared? – and he does not hesitate to approach Hannibal.

Hannibal's head feels blank. Empty. A program that has crashed.

All his focus is completely on Will.

Will strides forward in a few steps; kneels next to Hannibal to bring them to eye-level. Hannibal follows his gaze slowly, feeling woozy as he turns his chair.

"Careful," the EMT woman says briskly as the two FBI agents approach her patient, though she is already packing up. "He has a mild concussion. Head wound. No bright lights, loud noises," a stern look at Jack, "and give him time to answer."

Though Hannibal hears the words, they do not register. The only thing that matters is Will. *You're alive. You won. You're here.*

"I was worried you were dead," Hannibal manages eventually, words slurred.

"I'm not," Will assures him gently. "I'm here. I'm okay."

“Tobias Budge,” Jack starts hesitatingly, “killed two Baltimore police officers. Nearly killed an FBI special agent,” and it is only now that the blood on Will registers. Hannibal’s chest constricts painfully.

“…first stop is here, at your office.”

Hannibal turns his head to Jack, slowly. Does not, *cannot* raise his eyes to meet the Dom’s. Covers it up by closing them, raising one hand to his head.

Underneath his desk, Will settles one firm and reassuring hand to Hannibal’s leg.

It’s shockingly grounding.

“He came to kill my patient,” he manages. A shuddering breath, only a little faked. “I don’t know why. I don’t know,” and then he stops. He recognizes that he is not at full capacity now. Best not to say too much.

“Do you-” Jack begins.

“Maybe,” Will cuts in, “these questions can wait. Hannibal has a concussion, Jack. He’s a victim. The Maestro is dead. The rest can wait until tomorrow.”

Will shall take care of it, Hannibal thinks. There is a warm feeling inside his belly that is starting to spread to all his limbs.

His toe enters the sea, followed by his foot, then his leg.

“Sure,” Jack sighs, “but I want to know more tomorrow, first thing in the morning. And not a second later.”

Will bites back his annoyance. Dips his head. “Deal,” he says, then turns back to Hannibal. “I’ll drive him home.”

Hannibal’s mind latches on to the word. *Home. Safe*.

Will takes his arm and Hannibal follows without protest. His Dom starts leading him towards the exit and Hannibal has enough presence of mind to keep his eyes half-closed, a hand on his head. *I’m concussed,* the part of him still on dry land states desperately, *nothing more*.

“You do that, Will,” Jack says. Pauses. “That must have been one hell of a fight. Dr. Lecter is not usually so obedient.”

Somewhere within, Hannibal feels a flash of panic – but Will is quick to answer.

“Must have hit his head pretty hard,” he quips back, and Jack turns around with an amused huff.

They make their way out of Hannibal’s office with ease.

When they stop, Hannibal turns to Will in a daze.

“Your keys, please,” Will commands kindly and Hannibal obeys without question.

Another leg goes into the water.

No, no, no.

The drive towards his home is short. The Bentley is smooth and familiar around him. Soothing.

Before he knows it, Hannibal is in his living room, familiar smells and feelings wrapping around him.

Hannibal is sitting on the couch. Will is standing in front of him, tall and reassuring. Hannibal has the sudden urge to slide off the couch and onto his knees. It is only his life-long habit of self-control that makes him resist it.

“Do you know what is happening?”

Will’s voice is gentle.

“No,” Hannibal whispers.

Hands cradle his chin, tilting it upwards. “You’re falling into subspace, darling.” Will’s voice is sunlight on the first day of summer; the first bite of meat after a successful hunt. "You’ve had a intense day. Not only did you fight for your life, you also thought I was dead. That must have been a shock.”

Hannibal wants to reply, but stops himself, suddenly certain that whatever words would burst out of his mouth would not be in English.

There is a spark lighting up inside of him. It starts at the base of his spine and runs up, up through his lungs, through his throat until it finally escapes his lips.

And Hannibal Whines.

The Whine is low, unfamiliar, *desperate*. Hannibal has never heard himself make such a sound before, not since those cold winter nights in Lithuania. It did not work then, and he has never lowered himself to make such a noise since.

For Will, once more, he makes an exception.

As the sound fills the room, he feels Will stiffen. Hannibal sees the Dom react with every single part of his being. Will’s arms curve upwards and around him, a grounding touch on Hannibal’s neck. His smell intensifies, filling the air around Hannibal with its presence.

“***I’m here, Hannibal. Let go.***”

A rope is bound around his waist, securing him. Hannibal sighs, and sets off into the boundless sea.

The water feels like bliss, the tether around him stronger than steel.

Hannibal closes his eyes and lets go.

When he resurfaces, the doctor is not sure how much time has passed.

The first thing he's aware of is that he's on his knees. One of the cushions of the couch has been placed underneath his knees, and though they ache, it is not painful.

The second thing he's aware of is Will.

Will is sitting on the couch, a book in one hand, the other cradled in Hannibal's hair. Hannibal himself is leaning against Will's leg with his whole body.

Both of them are still fully clothed. The wave of worry is squashed before it begins. As Hannibal blinks, takes in the room, he notes the setting sun.

It must have been hours.

The third thing that registers is how *settled* he feels. The uneasy feeling in his chest is gone, replaced by a calm kind of warmth. The perpetual tightness of his limbs is gone, replaced by a relaxed looseness. His mind feels clearer than ever.

"Are you back with me, baby?"

Hannibal makes an affirming noise, the pet name causing a strange flutter in his chest.

He hears Will put the book away and lean forward. The hand in his hair grips it, gently, and tilts his head upwards.

Hannibal's eyes latch on to Will's immediately. "How are you feeling?" the profiler asks gently.

The sight of Will's calm and content face steals Hannibal's breath away. Never before has he wanted to kiss another person so desperately.

And so, still feeling free and content, Hannibal does.

The Sub surges upward smoothly, pushing himself into the Dom's lap with a single-minded passion. Will barely has any time to make room for him before Hannibal is leaning forward and pressing their lips together.

It is only after their mouths are joined that Hannibal's brain catches up with him.

What are you doing, he thinks half-panicked, an unfamiliar feeling of self-doubt rising within him as his long-buried instincts go haywire. He's starting to pull back as his cheeks flush, *this is not-*

As he pulls back, Will growls.

Will's hands are on his back, pressing Hannibal close against him. Their mouths meet once more, and Hannibal feels Will's desperation as if it was his own.

Will's lips are warm and forceful against him, pressing so wonderfully against his own. Hannibal lets out a needy moan and Will takes the opportunity to slip his tongue inside, exploring Hannibal's mouth like a delicacy.

Hannibal feels himself growing hard, warmth coursing through his body as their lips meet again and again. Will's chest rumbles in contentment even as he grabs Hannibal, one hand on his back and another on his ass, and turns them both to the side to press themselves against the couch.

Like this, Will is plastered all over him, the reassuring presence of his Dom making Hannibal instinctively go limp. Will's hands are roaming his chest, his shoulders, his arms, though he is not going any lower. They skirt around his nipples and Hannibal whines softly against Will's lips, wishing the man would just stop teasing him.

Will pulls back a little to huff out a laugh, to which Hannibal can only look at him in wonder. The Sub brings a hand up, slowly, and Will stills, allowing it. Hannibal trails a hand from Will's cheek to his neck, slowly going down over his chest and settling on his hip.

"Seems like you're doing pretty good, sweetheart," Will teases, eyes dancing. Hannibal smiles shyly at the form of address before the words register.

Abruptly, Hannibal's world comes crashing back down. He is Hannibal Lecter, and he has just killed a man. Then he apparently spent several hours in subspace at Will's feet.

Hannibal feels his own face go blank.

Will, sensing his mood, stills. Not able to help himself, the Dom darts forward for one quick peck on Hannibal's flushed lips, still glistering in the dim light of the living room.

Then Will moves back into a sitting position, helping Hannibal up as he does so.

Will clears his throat.

"How are you feeling?" he tries again.

The honest concern in his voice is unmistakable, and Hannibal cannot find it within himself to lie.

"Confused," he admits, "surprised". The flash of hurt in Will's eyes pierces surprisingly deep. "Content," he hastens to add, because it is also true. "Warm. Settled."

"You've never fallen into subspace before," Will says slowly.

Hannibal closes his eyes. The words spill out before he can stop them. "Not since I was eight," he confesses, very aware most children don't present their dynamic until they are at least twelve. "It was not voluntary. I- I lost my sister that day."

The simple phrases feel like scalpels, cutting him open, exposing the twisted and human parts of him he does not want the world to see. Hannibal does not dare to say Mischa's name aloud. He cannot bear it.

Will does not offer empty words of pity or sympathy. Instead, he presses his legs against Hannibal's in reassurance, even as his piercing eyes seek out Hannibal's own.

"You killed them."

Hannibal holds his gaze. "Yes."

Will nods, eyes cold. "Good."

Hannibal's breath catches. *My Will.*

He moves forward to bury himself into Will's arms and he does not feel ashamed. Will buries his face in Hannibal's hair in response and Hannibal is content.

All is silent for a few minutes.

"I hope I helped." Will breaks the silence with whispered words. "You were so far gone, and I wanted to take care of you so badly." The words are honest, raw. "But I did not want to do anything that you did not want. I didn't want to hurt you."

"You did not." Hannibal's voice is thick.

Will breathes out deeply, a shudder. When he speaks again, it is choked. "I'm glad."

After that, they go to the kitchen together. Hannibal takes out leftovers from the day before on autopilot. Will pours them two glasses of water and starts the coffee machine.

He navigates the complicated machine with ease, and Hannibal feels a pang of longing in his chest for how *right* Will looks here, in his kitchen.

"What you offered, yesterday," Hannibal starts, then stops. He cannot find the words.

It is a novel feeling.

Will straightens up and the flash of hope in his face makes Hannibal's heart light up. He forgets, sometimes, how Will is just as alone as he is.

"If you…" the doctor tries once more, then swallows. Takes a sip of water.

Will moves forward now, a little more confidently, though still as frail as a glass wall. Enough force, and he would shatter into pieces.

"Hannibal," Will asks earnestly, taking both of Hannibal's hands in his own. "Would you like me to take care of you?"

Burning maroon eyes meet glistering blue ones.

“Do you want to be my Submissive, and give me the honour of being your Dominant in turn?”

If Hannibal wanted to, he could let Will fall, watch him scatter to pieces on his cold kitchen tiles. Like a teacup.

He won’t.

“Yes,” Hannibal breathes, and Will surges forward to meet him with a kiss.

The next few weeks go by quickly.

Hannibal visits Will in Wolf Trap thrice, bringing treats for his dogs every single time. They like him, and he does not mind them. They do not judge, even as Will sneaks his arms around him from behind as Hannibal cooks in Will’s simple kitchen.

Their relationship does not suddenly transform into something different; they are still Will and Hannibal, profiler and psychiatrist, friend and friend. Hannibal is somehow surprised with how little it changes. Suspicious, at first, ignoring every single question that even sounds a little bit like an order from Will purely out of spite. Will never comments on it.

Their conversations continue, though now with dinner. Will eats slowly and Hannibal does not bother to hide his staring. Afterwards, Will presses Hannibal into the couch and Hannibal lets himself be worshipped.

Will is more affectionate. Where before, Hannibal was always the one to instigate physical contact with a clear and calculating purpose, now it is Will who removes the space between their bodies. His purpose is simple, yet devastatingly disarming.

Intimacy.

A hand on his shoulder in approval when they sit down with dinner. Feet brushing along his lower leg underneath the table. Their hands touching when Will hands him his home-made coffee, brought along in a thermos.

Every time Will instigates the touch, Hannibal, touch-starved for so long, has to remind himself to start breathing again. Presses down the pleas in his chest that want to ask for *more, Sir, please*.

As the weeks go by, a part of Hannibal starts to unfurl. A part that he has only ever seen as an obstacle to be overcome is now growing within him. Flourishing. It is filling his thoughts and bringing up urges at random times throughout the day. Most of them centre around Will.

He wants to please Will. Wants to be *good* for him.

At night, Hannibal stares at his ceiling and examines his own mind. The looks Will gives him are full of promise, but he does not actually do anything about them. Nothing more then kissing and touching above the waist.

Hannibal discovers he is disappointed at this fact.

The Chesapeake Ripper strikes again. A Dominant this time, with a bad reputation and several lawsuits against him that did not stick. His eyes are removed, as are his ears and tongue. *See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil*. Will reconstructs Hannibal's crime scene before his very eyes, almost effortless. When Will meets his eyes afterwards, Hannibal wants to consume him.

He thinks he may be in love.

They do not have sex. Hannibal's neck is still bare. Will still brings them coffee.

And Hannibal walks through the city, the park, the market. Sees the different Dominants and Submissives around them, and instead of disdain, feels himself wondering.

Imagining.

Playful curls fill his mind's eye, the ghost of a touch of a strong hand on his neck. Hannibal shivers, pulls his coat thicker around him, and bites back a shy smile.

"You have to be kidding me," is the only thing Will can think of.

"I'm not," Jack says grimly, while at the same time Alana murmurs, "That's what I said."

The three of them are in Jack's office. The blinds are drawn shut. It's almost lunchtime, and downstairs, Hannibal is waiting to be taken to lunch.

Instead, Will is here, and he's not happy.

"You think *Hannibal Lecter* is the Chesapeake Ripper?"

Spread on Jack's desk is Will's profile on the Chesapeake Ripper, a blend of truth and not-quite-truths mixed in with some misdirection. It is a careful project, moderately successful. The question is: is it enough?

The set of Jack's jaw is resolute. "The profile fits, Will. Former surgeon, Dom or dominant non-dynamic, forty to fifty-five years old, confirmed bachelor. Intelligent, controlled, theatrical. I don't like it any more than you do, but it fits. Hannibal has the skills and the temperament both. We *have* to take this seriously."

"Except that Hannibal is kind," Alana argues, "and caring. He wants to help people, Jack, not kill them."

"He wants to figure them out," Jack counters, and Will's brain is racing. Of course now would be the moment Jack finally trusts his own instincts instead of Will's.

"In order to help them," Alana says once more, an undercurrent of desperation in her voice.

“Will,” Jack says and suddenly Will can see the glint in Jack’s eyes for what it is. *Convince me I’m wrong. Please. I don’t want to believe it.*

Will is always happy to provide what his friends need.

He also knows Jack’s instincts are sharp, especially concerning the Ripper. He has to cut this off quickly, efficiently, *completely*. There can be no doubt left in Jack’s mind.

“Hannibal fits some of the criteria,” he allows and sees Jack nod aggressively even as Alana’s eyebrows arch a little at the use of the good doctor’s first name. “But there are just as many that he does not.”

“First of all,” Will starts, “the Ripper is careful. He would never be as arrogant to set himself in the spotlight, which he would do when he would be working with us. The satisfaction he gets is from the kills themselves, not from our dancing around them.”

“But working with us would give him more insight into our investigation,” Jack argues.

“And us more insight into him.” Will’s voice is steady, resolute. “He wouldn’t risk it. Secondly,” turning around as he paces, hoping the lies he’d crafted these past few weeks hold, “the Ripper does not have any friends. Barely has any acquaintances, and those he has are used mostly to fuel his own ego. He sees other people as beneath him, and would never be interested in their lives. Hannibal has friends. He has you,” as he nods to both Alana and Jack, “and me, and Ellen Komeda, and another few other Baltimore socialites who regularly grace his dinner table. Would you say Hannibal takes an interest in your life?”

“He does,” Jack says slowly, thinking of Bella. “Good point.”

Will keeps his face neutral. That was the hook. Now it’s time for the line.

“We’re friends, yes,” Alana says, seriously considering Will’s words. “I would even call us close friends.” The faintest traces of a blush on her cheeks. Will fights the urge to bare his teeth.

“Though I will say,” and now she looks a little uneasy, “I still have this feeling…” She swallows. “Like there is some part of him that he does not want me to know, that he keeps hidden. A secret he has yet to share.”

Both Jack and Alana look to Will as if waiting for him to dispute her argument.

Instead, Will nods. “He does. I know about it.”

A moment of silence.

“You do?” Jack asks sceptically. “Well, then, what is it?” As Jack says this, Alana leans forward as well, clearly interested.

Line.

“Give me ten minutes,” he says confidently. Will sees Jack’s mouth open to protest and holds up a hand. “Ten minutes,” he repeats, barely stopping himself from putting Dominance in his voice.

Jack’s eyes narrow. “Not a second more.”

“Got it, chief,” Will says and walks briskly out of the door.

As he descends the stairs of the BAU, Will’s mind races. He turns one corridor, then another, turning and turning just like his thoughts.

Hannibal is standing in front of his office door. He is smiling, ready to go to lunch, but the smile quickly turns into a frown as he lays eyes on Will.

“Will,” he says as the Dom passes him by and pulls him into his office, “what is going on?”

The door is closed. Will pulls Hannibal into his arms. Pulls their foreheads together, forcing Hannibal to meet his eyes. He puts one hand on his shoulder, the other flat on the back of Hannibal’s neck in preparation.

Hannibal goes tense. He meets Will’s eyes without hesitation. There is a warning in his eyes, a flashing light saying *there better be a reason you are doing this here and now*.

“Jack suspects you of being the Chesapeake Ripper,” he says softly.

Hannibal freezes. Suddenly, Will’s hand on his neck is the only thing that’s keeping him upright.

Then Hannibal lets out a very soft Whine.

It shakes Will to the core.

Immediately, the urge to *protect provide defend* overwhelms him. Will has to grit his teeth to stop himself from going back up to Jack’s office and snapping the man’s neck with his bare hands.

It is not a useful urge. Will takes a deep breath and resumes talking, fingers trembling with the effort.

“I’m sorry for springing it on you like that. I’ve only known for fifteen minutes myself. I’ve been editing my profile on the Ripper over these past few weeks, but there is still enough for them to link it to you. To get a warrant.”

Hannibal, if possible, grows even stiller, but Will does not stop talking. “Jack and Alana are in his office right now. I’ve managed to get Jack teetering on the edge, and Alana is wilfully blind enough that she’s easy to convince.” He isn’t sure Hannibal is breathing. “But if we want to cut this off completely, we have to throw them off the trail for once and for all.”

Slowly, as if he is a statue petrified by Will’s Medusa eyes and brought back to life by the Gods, Hannibal starts to move. First, the muscles under Will’s hand relax. Next, he starts

breathing again. Then, his hands slowly move upwards so he can grasp Will by the lapel of his jacket.

“You know,” he whispers, and in that moment Hannibal sounds so vulnerable Will wants to hide him away in his basement and never let him out.

“I do,” he whispers back, “I have for a while now. Ever since you killed Tobias. And then, the last tableaux…” The familiar feeling. The little hints.

“And you…” Hannibal doesn’t say anything further.

Will smiles indulgently, and only a little darkly. “You’re *mine*, Hannibal.”

He hears his father’s words echoing in his mind. *When you finally find your match, son,* the gruff but kind man told him so many times, *you take care of ‘em. You make ‘em feel precious. You place them above anything else in the world, Will, because they are the most important thing in yours.*

“My duty is to take care of you. And whether that means bringing you under when you need it or lying to the FBI, I will do it. I will not let you down.”

The words hit Hannibal hard, and the doctor takes a deep and shaky breath.

Hannibal opens his mouth to say something else, but Will cuts him off. “Let’s talk about this more later, sweetheart,” he adds gently before letting the urgency in his voice resurface. “For now, we have Jack to deal with.”

Hannibal visibly gets himself back together. His hands tighten on Will’s chest.

“We have to kill Jack,” he states soberly.

Will cannot help but smile.

“You have such wonderful instincts, sometimes,” amusement clear in Will’s voice. Hannibal’s eyes jerk to him, frowning. “Don’t worry. That’s just one of the many reasons I love you, darling.”

The tension in Hannibal’s frame melts away at these words, a wonderful tender look coming into his eyes. Will smiles tenderly, even as his thoughts are still on the goal.

Good. He needs Hannibal emotional for this.

“We are not going to kill Jack, Hannibal,” Will says fondly, “that is very much a last resort. If we do that, we’ll have to flee the country. No. We are going to go upstairs and reveal our relationship status to him. Fully.”

Hannibal tenses up once more. “Are you sure we cannot just kill him,” he half-whines. “If there is one man I do not want to have this knowledge…”

Will moves his hand from Hannibal's shoulder to stroke his cheek. "It's the most effective and painless move there is," he says soothingly, "and Jack is old-fashioned enough that he'll drop his suspicions completely. Furthermore, he's honourable enough to not spread this information, nor will Alana. You can say about Jack what you want, but he doesn't discriminate. He's an asshole to everyone, to Subs as much as fellow Doms."

Will's saying it as much to reassure himself as Hannibal. Will knows that Hannibal knows this is the best action to take. That doesn't mean it isn't risky.

Giving up your biggest secret to protect your second, but far more dangerous secret.

"I have a plan," Will says softly, "and it is going to work. Do you trust me?"

Keeping Will's gaze for a long second, Hannibal eventually gives a slow nod.

"Do you want to be good for me, sweetheart?"

Hannibal's pupils dilate. The corners of his mouth twitch, aware that he is being manipulated yet only respecting Will more for it.

"Please, Sir." The words feel strange on his tongue, but good. Right. "I'll be good."

Will smiles, proudly, and trails a hand along the underside of Hannibal's jaw. The Sub shivers.

"I know you will," Will says.

Will calmly opens the door to Jack's office.

"Will," Jack starts immediately as he walks in, "good. We were just-"

Jack cuts himself off as Hannibal enters the office behind Will. His eyes are on Hannibal, who is looking at the ground in an unusual display of demureness. Will is so proud of him.

"Less than eight minutes," he says instead with a quick glance at his watch and a smile, nodding to Alana who is watching them all with a frown on her face.

"Will," she says, "what is going on?"

"Do enlighten us," Jack adds dangerously.

"Hannibal and I want to tell you something," Will says instead of answering. Looks at Hannibal.

The doctor is visibly tense, the line of his jaw taut in a way Will knows is on purpose. The straightness of his spine and twitching of his fingers, however, are all genuine.

"I have not been entirely honest with you both," Hannibal starts, then stops.

Jack is silent. Alana leans forward, both curious and empathetic. “It’s okay, Hannibal. Whatever you want to tell us, we will not think any less of you.”

Hannibal smiles wryly. It looks alien on his face.

“When you say Hannibal and I, Will,” Jack interrupts sharply.

Hannibal swallows, then meets Jack’s eyes. “Yes,” he answers, “and no. It is true that Will and I have entered into a romantic relationship,” Hannibal’s voice is steady. Jack’s frown is severe, looking at both Will and Hannibal with suspicion, now.

Alana, in contrast, leans back in surprise, her mouth falling open in a soft ‘o’.

“However, that is not what I was alluding to, Jack.”

“Then please do tell us, *Hannibal*” Jack responds and Will thinks *come on, baby, you can do it.*

Jack and Alana are on the line now, and it is time to reel them in. Leave them any longer and they’ll swim away, weary for the next time the bait bobbles in the water.

“I am not a non-dynamic,” Hannibal says in one long breath. “And I am not a Dominant either.”

Will steps forward, putting a soothing hand on between Hannibal’s shoulder blades.

“With which I mean to tell you,” Hannibal begins, and his voice cracks just a little, “to- to tell you…” *Now you’re overdoing it*, Will thinks, but maybe he is not. Maybe he underestimated how difficult this would be for his Sub.

“I am a Submissive.”

Good boy. Now reel them in.

Alana reels back in shock, whole body going stiff. Her eyes are wide and disbelieving.

Jack’s eyebrows have climbed into his hairline. The angry suspicion has fallen of his face, replaced by honest confusion. “What?!”

“There was a lot of discrimination against Submissives in my youth,” Hannibal says, and Will feels his own surprise, because that is the truth. “My ambitions and dreams did not suit themselves for what they thought a Submissive could and should do. My aunt and uncle helped me hide it.” This time, the words are a perfect blend of truth and misdirection.

Alana is staring wide-eyed at her friend, a mix of empathy and hurt in her eyes.

Hannibal’s accent even comes through thicker. As if he is getting emotional.

“Here in America, it is better,” Hannibal continues. “But it is still not… A risk. I could take,” he swallows, suddenly sounding more demure than Alana and Jack have ever heard him,

“I’m sorry if-”

Will decides it’s enough. He doesn’t want Hannibal to do endure this any more than is absolutely necessary.

“Shhh,” Will says as he steps forward, placing himself between Hannibal and the others. He draws Hannibal in his arms, shielding him from the world. Putting both his hands to the side of Hannibal’s face so that the only thing Hannibal can see and smell is him; a classic and recognizable technique to soothe a troubled Submissive.

For a moment, it is silent. Hannibal trembles ever-so-slightly in his arms, and suddenly Will does not know if that is faked or not. A worried rumble climbs out of his chest, and Hannibal relaxes.

More than anything else in the world, Will thinks.

“I had no idea,” Alana is the first one to speak up. “I- It’s- It’s okay, Hannibal, it’s okay.” Her smile is wobbly.

“I understand why you wanted to hide it. Sometimes I want to hide it,” covering the last of her unsettledness with a little humour, “and I grew up in America.”

Will’s eyes move to Jack. He speaks as if Hannibal is not there. “You see?” he asks the fish they truly want to catch. “Not a Dom or dominant non-dynamic, neither a bachelor. Just a man who does not want to be treated like a footstool,” he spits the last words angrily, not at Jack but at the world around him.

“Prove it,” Jack says quietly.

“Jack!” Alana says loudly, affronted, but Will is not surprised.

“No, Alana,” Jack cuts her off, “I know. I *want* to believe this, and though I did not expect this at all. The way Hannibal behaves- the way you let him treat you, Will,” and Will’s eyes flash. He knows Jack does simply not understand their relationship, that Jack himself would never let his Sub treat him like Hannibal treats Will, but Will’s hackles are still rising.

Jack winces a little at his own words. “Sorry,” he murmurs, “I just-” and here Jack cuts himself off, swallows.

Looks Will straight in the eyes.

“Theoretically, you could have faked this whole performance. I don’t think you did,” Jack says quickly when Alana opens her mouth in anger, “but I need to be sure. I *need* to. It’s the Ripper, Will. You know what that means.”

And Will understands. He does. He sees the quiet desperation in Jack’s eyes, the tremble of his fingers that want to reach out to soothe the troubled Sub, the slant of his mouth that implies how much he hates his own paranoia.

And that's good. That's what Will's counting on. Because the cornerstone of their deception is true. Hannibal *is* a Submissive, after all. And when this is proven, Jack will have assured all his doubts, and he will never suspect Hannibal again.

Sinker.

So Will answers agitatedly, as would be expected of a Dominant whose Submissive is being questioned, but confidently. "I understand, Jack. It's okay."

Drawing back slightly, the harsh light of the office falls suddenly on Hannibal's face. Will makes a soothing noise as he draws Hannibal towards him, creating as much distance between them and Jack as possible.

"Hannibal," Will says, and readies himself. They'd agreed upon this, yes, but they both know it is not a pleasant experience for the doctor. Not like this. "You're doing so well, sweetheart," he adds gently, and Hannibal does not look towards anyone but Will, keeping his gaze on Will's face.

His cheeks are flushed and his mouth trembles, but his eyes are sharp.

"Now be a good boy for me," Will whispers, sees the way Hannibal's tongue flickers out to wet his lips. Taking a breath, he carefully manages the strength of his Command, "and ***kneel***."

The Command is absolute. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees how Alana falls deeper into her chair with a blush, but he barely pays it any mind. Instead, his focus is on Hannibal. On his Submissive.

Hannibal instinctively tries to resist it, as they both knew he would. Hostile territory, surrounded by strangers, a life-long habit of defiance – Hannibal has trouble letting himself float in a safe environment, never mind this one.

Behind them, Jack is watching guardedly. The man's brow furrows as Hannibal does not immediately drop to his knees.

Instead the Sub's legs buckle, once, twice, before his resistance turns into acceptance.

Hannibal drops to his knees on the cold and hard floor of Jack's office, burying his face into Will's legs. As he does so, his body curls up defensively.

And then, and then, an apology to his Dom as much as a plea for help being forced into such a vulnerable position-

Hannibal lets out a soft and piercing Whine.

The sound reverberates through the office, low and sweet. Jack is halfway out of his chair, hand extended, before he stops himself. The relief on his face is palpable.

Even fellow Submissives are not unaffected by another Sub's distress. Alana, already sympathizing with Hannibal, actually stands up from her chair. Her eyes are tearing up as she

steps forward, hand reaching towards Hannibal's shoulder, eyes shining wetly. "Hannibal, I'm-"

"***Don't come closer,***" Will snarls before he can stop himself.

Alana freezes. Hannibal buries his face deeper into Will's thigh.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart," Will immediately murmurs softly as he places one hand on Hannibal's neck like a collar, grounding him. "You did so good. So good for me. I'm so proud of you."

Only after Hannibal stops trembling does Will look up at Alana.

"Apologies," Will grits out between clenched teeth. "But I don't want you to be near Hannibal right now. Let alone actually touch him. Neither of you," he continues with a look to Jack, who doesn't look surprised.

"Will," Alana says softly.

"No," Will fires back and his voice books no disagreement. "No matter your reasoning, you both just forced Hannibal to share a part of his life with you that he did not want to, while *also* accusing him of being a *psychopathic serial killer*." The last few words were hissed.

Against his leg, he feels Hannibal's cheeks curl up in a hidden smile.

"I understand," Jack says evenly. Placating.

"Thank you, Jack," Will says stiffly. "If there are no more questions that *absolutely cannot wait* until later," he continues, and Jack shuts his mouth once more, "I would like both of you to leave my Submissive and I alone for the next thirty minutes. I'll take the rest of the day off."

Alana bites her lip at the phrasing *my Submissive* before nodding and making her way out. "I'm sorry," she says again before she closes the door behind her.

Will turns to meet Jack's gaze. The man looks conflicted.

"I'm not going to apologize, Will," he says. "And Dr. Lecter," he adds when Will raises an eyebrow.

Hannibal does not react. Will, a little concerned, runs a hand through his hair. The strands are soft underneath his hands.

Jack's eyes trail along the gesture, then snap back up to Will's face. "But I will also admit I am not proud of this." Jack's eyes unfocus, lost in memory for just a few seconds.

"I'll be back in an hour, and not a minute less," the other Dom says gruffly, a non-verbal apology, and locks the office behind him as he leaves. The turn-lock at the inside of the door settles in place as he goes.

For a few moments, both Hannibal and Will are silent. Will keeps running one hand through Hannibal's hair, playing with the strands. The other hand he trails along Hannibal's shoulder until it settles on his neck, firm and reassuring.

Eventually, Hannibal raises his head. His gaze is steady.

"That was more intense than I expected," the kneeling man whispers.

"You did so good," Will says, half-purring. "You were perfect. Your words, your actions, everything. I'm so proud of you."

He guides Hannibal up until they are both standing, their foreheads touching. Will hopes his face shows even a fraction of the pride, protectiveness, reverence and admiration he feels for Hannibal right now.

It must show at least something, because Hannibal smiles.

"You okay again?" Will asks softly.

Hannibal nods. Pulls himself back. Will lets him.

"Though I will not say I am fully recovered," Hannibal admits while steadily meeting Will's eyes, and Will is so proud, so happy, "I dare say that only you will be able to see that."

Reassured, Will's smile morphs into a grin.

He spreads his arms.

"And we still have over forty-five minutes alone, unsupervised, in the office of the head of the BAU." His grin turns a little twisted. "Don't I take good care of you, darling?"

It's meant as a joke, but Hannibal's face softens.

"You do."

willing

Chapter Summary

A dinner party.

Chapter Notes

thank jonnimir for the beta!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

you had this expression on your face
like you weren't quite sure you were supposed to be on earth.

"You invited Alana *and* Jack?"

Hannibal turns around from where he is directing his hired staff for tonight. They are competent, yes, but do need proper instructions.

Smiling at Will, Hannibal nods. "Phyllis, as well."

"Huh," Will says in surprise, then shrugs. "I'm going upstairs to change."

"I left your clothes on our bed."

"My own suit was not good enough?"

Hannibal arches an elegant eyebrow. Will's eyes dance with amusement.

"I didn't even bring it," the profiler admits.

Hannibal's chest fills with warmth. He steps closer to Will, giving his Dom a short but sweet kiss.

When Will looks ready to dive back in for more, Hannibal pushes him back playfully. "Go change," he commands, and Will smirks mischievously.

“Yes, sir,” he says with a curtsy. Around them, the hired staff watch them with amusement, drawing their own conclusions.

As Will disappears upstairs, Hannibal cannot help but watch him go.

The profiler truly is a marvellous being.

How fortunate he is, to be able to claim Will as his. To be claimed by Will.

The sudden longing in his chest surprises Hannibal. There is a warm pull inside of him urging him just to go upstairs and wrap himself in his Dom’s arms and voice and float the rest of the day away.

Shaking his head, the doctor breathes out deeply and saves the urge away for later. Maybe even tonight.

With warmth in his chest, Hannibal turns his attention back to the kitchen.

“Every dish tonight has been selected and prepared with the uttermost care,” Hannibal says as he raises his glass. “Bon appétit.”

His guests toast him with smiles, and Hannibal sits down back at the head of the table.

For a few moments, everyone is silent. Hannibal’s eyes flicker from face to face, savouring the way they all start to consume the flesh laid out before them, ignorant as pigs are when they are fattened up before slaughter.

He makes sure to look at Will the last, even when it may result in missing the first bite. If he starts watching Will, he will not be able to look away.

“Heavenly,” Ellen Komeda says from his left, a good friend placed more often near the head of the table, and a very good conversationalist.

“It really is,” Jack compliments from next to Ellen. Another seat down, Bella voices her agreement, her sleek but elegant collar snug around her neck.

“No matter how often I taste your cooking, you still manage to outdo yourself every time, Hannibal.” Alana, sitting across from Jack, is never shy with her compliments. It’s one of the reasons Hannibal likes her so much.

“I try,” Hannibal says kindly, thinking of the his last tableau, the shards of glass spread out around the dead Sub like wings. He is particularly proud of that one.

More compliments from the rest of the table, which Hannibal takes in with grace. Only then, when the social niceties are done and air is filled with sounds of cutlery and chewing, does Hannibal pick up his own knife and fork.

Allows his gaze to flicker to Will.

Their eyes meet. The world around them falls silent.

As Hannibal watches, Will watches him back. As Hannibal's hands close around the cutlery, only then does Will pick up his own. As Hannibal cuts into the meat, so does Will.

As Hannibal raises the long pig to his mouth and takes a bite, so does Will copy him, every move a single beat behind.

Just like a high society Submissive.

When Hannibal showed Will his seat for the evening before the other guests had arrived, he had expected resistance. A token protest, at least, about how it was not appropriate, or necessary, or a half-teasing remark about not expecting him to act the part. As high society dictated, for a Dom-Sub pair to be hosting an event, the seating rules were simple.

The Dom, at the head of the table. The Sub, on their right side, either on their knees or on softly cushioned chair, depending on the occasion and the couple.

But Will did nothing like that. He simply smiled at Hannibal, touched a hand to the inside of Hannibal's wrist, and agreed.

And now, without Hannibal even asking anything like it, Will was publicly – though subtly – submitting to him.

Hannibal's pupils blow wide as the flavour of the meat hit him at the precise moment that Will's lips close around his fork. Hannibal's eyes flutter in pleasure, but he keeps them open out of sheer force of will.

All the better to watch Will's knowing enjoyment. If Will asked, he would banish all his guests in a heartbeat, so that Will might spread him out on the table and feast on him all night.

The heat pooling in his gut pulls Hannibal out of his thoughts, and he takes a moment to make sure none of his inner thoughts are visible on his face.

Will gives him a knowing smile.

The dinner had gone swimmingly. Will was perfect. He did not speak a lot, only joining the conversation at Hannibal's leads or when asked a direct question. This was not very out of character for the profiler, who was more like a social caterpillar at the best of times.

It also fitted the behaviour of a high-society Submissive. Hannibal was certain this was on purpose.

Alana and Ellen were friendly with each other and both Jack and Bella were capable conversationalists. It was interesting to Hannibal to see the softer side of the head of the BAU who, for all that he could be brash sometimes, was obviously completely in love with his wife and Sub.

Though their relationship was more on the traditional side of Dom/Sub pairings, Jack treated Bella with respect, and Bella herself had a very sharp mind.

Now that dinner had passed, it was time for mingling. The guests had moved from the dining room into the drawing room, being provided with wines and small snacks as they talked. Hannibal had already made his rounds, Will hot on his heels, relying on Hannibal's cues more out of social awkwardness and uneasiness than of any sense of submission. That it looked that way to onlookers, well, Hannibal would not complain.

Hannibal had left Will talking to Bella, the sub pleasantly sharp and intelligent, before retreating to the kitchen.

The kitchen staff is cleaning dishes, preparing snacks and bringing up his pre-selected wines.

Surveying his staff with a critical eye, the doctor turns around as he hears the click-clack of heels behind him.

"You have a lovely home."

Speaking of the devil.

"Thank you, Phyllis," he says with a graceful dip of his head, wondering why she had sought him out.

Bella steps closer to him, her lovely emerald green dress fluttering around her, the collar around her throat complementing the look. Hannibal's eyes flicker ever so briefly to the thin strip of black, imagining the weight of it against his own neck. His hands twitches and he mentally berates himself for the slip of composure.

"I wanted to tell you that Jack told me," she says gently, and Hannibal's face falls back into blankness. He supposes he shouldn't be surprised.

"And I wanted to offer my insights and experience," Bella continued, eyes flickering towards the two staff members currently bringing in dirty dishes. "But only if you feel it would be useful."

Hannibal's first instinct is to brush her off gently, but sternly. He doesn't need anyone's help, and especially not from a Sub who would wear a collar openly.

Reconsiders. Takes a breath.

Though Bella does wear Jack's collar, she sat next to the head of the BAU at the dinner table like an equal. She deferred to him, yes, but subtly, and in such a way that did not erase the fact that she was an intelligent woman herself.

And whatever he would say to Bella, she would surely relay to Jack. An opportunity.

So instead of brushing her off, Hannibal smiles convincingly. "Would you like to assist me with choosing a wine?"

Bella responds with a graceful nod. “It would be an honour,” she agrees demurely, bowing her head in compliance and allowing Hannibal to lead her down to the cellar on his arm.

As soon as they are alone in the cellar – cellar, not basement – Hannibal drops her arm. Somehow, alone with someone who knows, it seems false.

“I am not sure I am comfortable with Jack spreading this knowledge around,” he admits honestly.

Bella places a reassuring hand on his shoulder. Hannibal wants to frown. Usually, people are not so free in touching him. “I won’t tell a soul,” she promises, and he believes her. “I’ll admit that sometimes, I would like to hide my status as well. Not to Jack,” she quickly adds, “never. But for every ten decent folk, there is always one bigot. And that can just be the one to ruin everything.”

Hannibal hums in agreement, turning around to face Bella fully, dislodging her hand. She takes the hint and lets her hands dangle freely.

“What does it mean to you?” Hannibal asks, genuinely curious. “Being Submissive?”

“It means trust,” Bella answers, trailing her hands along the many bottles of wine stacked high along the walls. “Trusting Jack to take care of what I need. But also him trusting me to give him what he needs.”

Hannibal cocks his head.

“Don’t let them fool you,” Bella says with a teasing smile. “Dominants need just as much reassurance and praise as Submissives. Just in a different way.”

The air of the cellar is cool against Hannibal’s skin. He listens attentively as Bella speaks. “Dominants need to have someone to take care of, someone to please and be pleased by in return. Without a Submissive – or a substitute, like a child or a pet – Dominants can feel… meaningless. Purposeless. It is the Submissive who gives the Dominant something to protect.”

“Do you consider yourself equal to Jack?”

Bella’s eyes are piercing. “I do. As should any healthy couple, in my opinion.” At Hannibal’s sceptical look, Bella elaborates. “Yes, even those Subs who like to sit at their Dom’s feet whenever possible have Doms who feel uneasy whenever their Sub is not close by. A true relationship should always be two parties who give and take equally; whose desires are mirrors of the other.”

Bella averts her eyes. “Of course, I am aware not all relationships work like that. I hold a more modern view than some of the traditionalists, but it is not an uncommon one. Jack agrees with me.” She shoots him a quick smile. “When I submit, I am free. I do not have a care in the world, and I know that any need I have, Jack will do his best to meet.”

A moment of silence follows. Bella leans back against a nearby barrel, relaxing.

“So in your experience,” Hannibal summarizes slowly, choosing his words with care, “you do not feel as if you are lesser than your Dom. Because his task is to fulfil your needs, and though your needs may be submissive in nature, he is still the one working to fulfil your desires.”

“And in turn, I fulfil his,” Bella adds gently. “And I want to. When Jack praises me, I enjoy it, and I know that he enjoys it as well.”

Hannibal muses over her words, surprised to find himself playing with the lapels of his jacket. He forces his hands back down. “And sometimes,” he adds, thinking of Will, “your Dominant knows what you need before you yourself do.”

Bella turns to him with a genuine smile. “If they’re a good Dom, they do.”

Jack is really lucky to have her, Hannibal thinks. *Bella is an insightful woman*.

“I won’t ask what happened to you that made you hide your dynamic as you do,” Bella adds, and Hannibal feels his shoulders tense. The flash of memory is short, but strong. A cabin in the woods, his sister cowering behind him, men entering the cabin with teeth bared, ***sit down and shut up***. Hannibal, obeying without understanding why.

“But no one hides themselves like that without reason.”

Hannibal blinks, back in the present. Bella is watching him with heavy eyes.

“I just want you to realize that there are plenty of good and kind Dominants out there. Doms who want nothing more than to please you, take care of you and make you feel safe.”

The words should be trite, meaningless. As a therapist, he knows such reassurances are superfluous, empty, rote. They should fall flat, maybe even make him angry.

They don’t. They aren’t.

“Like Will,” Hannibal says before he can stop himself.

“Yes,” Bella says.

Hannibal feels his chest tighten. Leans back against the wall. The coolness is pleasant against his back.

His mouth moves without his permission. “What can I do to be a good Submissive?”

When the words are spoken, Hannibal swallows heavily. He is Hannibal Lecter. He is not unsure about anything, and he needs anyone’s advice even less.

Apparently, Will is, once again, the exception to this rule.

“There is no good or bad Submissive,” Bella says gently, and Hannibal soothes himself with thinking that this will make Jack even more convinced of his innocence. “But there is a general rule that may be useful to you.”

Hannibal looks up.

“There is a difference,” Bella explains, “between your Dom making you submit to him, and you submitting freely and out of your own will. Showing your Dom that you want to submit to him, chose it without question – well. It will certainly halt him in his tracks.”

The smile playing around her mouth is not pitying at all, even though Hannibal knows what she must be – correctly – thinking. Hannibal has never submitted to Will out of his own initiative.

Bella has been surprisingly helpful. Kind. Polite.

Hannibal decides right then and there that if Bella ever asks him for a favour, he will give it to her.

“Have you seen Bella?”

Mrs. Komeda turns around at the same time as Will as Jack approaches them both.

“She’s around here, somewhere,” Will answers non-committedly.

“I haven’t seen her in a while,” Jack says, a little concerned.

“Phyllis seems like a woman who can surely take care of herself, like any decent Submissive,” Mrs. Komeda comments airily, shooting Will a smirk. “Right?”

Will simply inclines his head.

“For that matter, I haven’t seen Dr. Lecter in a while, either,” Jack comments next, searching the crowd currently mingling in Hannibal’s foyer with a policemen’s eye.

Will shrugs. “I’m his partner, not his keeper,” he says evenly, smiling wryly as Jack frowns at him.

“I’m going to find them,” Jack says, walking off.

“What an old-fashioned Dom,” Mrs. Komeda comments neutrally.

Will sighs. “Jack’s a good man,” he says, “but he tends to be… overly concerned. It’s worse with Phyllis, of course, but he can be like that towards his team as well.” *As long as they solve their cases quickly, of course,* he adds mentally. “But his heart is in the right place.”

“Well, I, for one, am glad you are so unlike him,” Mrs. Komeda adds with a glint in her eye. Will gives her an uncomfortable smile.

“I, uh, am indeed not very old-fashioned,” he agrees broadly. Though Will’s not exactly playing a Sub tonight, he is playing the part of a non-dynamic. He thinks.

Mostly, he’s going with Hannibal’s flow.

“I have known Hannibal for a very long time” Mrs. Komeda says. “And I am glad he has finally found a partner who will treat him like he deserves.”

Will looks at her for a long moment.

His lips curl into a smile.

“I’m glad,” he says warmly and takes another sip.

Hannibal is still mulling over Bella’s answer to his unexpected question – unexpected to himself, that is – when the cellar door opens.

“Bella?”

It’s Jack. He sounds worried, though he is covering it up admirably. Hannibal sighs, already anticipating how Bella is going to bend her neck.

The head of the BAU descends the stairs swiftly, body tense. As soon as he catches sight of the pair of them leaning against opposite walls, looking for all the world like they are just having a normal though emotional conversation – which is the truth, for once – his whole body relaxes.

“There you are,” he says with only a little relief in his voice. “And Dr. Lecter,” giving Hannibal a respectful nod.

Bella, to Hannibal’s surprise, only folds her arms. “Yes, here I am,” she says with amusement. “Dr. Lecter and I were having a private conversation, if you do not mind.”

“And choosing the wine,” Hannibal adds charmingly even as his respect for Bella grows.

“A private conversation?” Jack asks.

“Nothing for a Dominant to concern himself with,” Bella adds pointedly, though she softens it with a smile.

“Oh,” Jack says awkwardly. “Apologies,” he says to them both, and he means it. Hannibal feels the last remaining nuggets of suspicion dissipate into dust. “I’ll leave you two to it.”

“Thank you, Jack,” Bella adds kindly as she shoots her husband a fond look. Jack returns it with equal favour before gently closing the door behind him.

“You see?” she asks Hannibal as soon as Jack is gone. “He cares for me, but he does not dictate every aspect of my life. Mind you, I’d have been a lot more submissive if there was anyone else with us,” she adds conspiratorially, “but that is because I know Jack cares about his reputation. And he knows that I know that. We care for each other.”

Hannibal nods.

They set out to choose a wine.

“There is one last thing I am wondering, if you don’t mind my curiosity,” Bella asks him after they have chosen and are preparing to go back upstairs.

Hannibal dusts his knees off from where he was inspecting the bottles and looks up. “You may always ask,” he allows gracefully.

“Tonight, Will played the part of your Submissive near-perfectly. Anyone who does not know better,” which is almost everyone, “would believe your roles were reversed.”

The question need not be asked. Hannibal decides to indulge her.

“Will has never been one to care much about others’ perception of him,” Hannibal tells her, “or about what society has determined to be Dominant or Submissive behaviour.”

Bella does not say anything.

“And,” Hannibal continues, “it is what I desire. And Will always gives me what I desire.”

Bella smiles. “He must love you very much.”

“He does.”

Chapter End Notes

the next chapter is 8.5k of smut and will be posted within a week so if you're not into that, skip the next chapter and this'll be a lovely ending <3 and if you're into it then OH BOY LETS GOOOO

we bones lying here bare await yours

Chapter Summary

It's playtime.

Chapter Notes

thank jonnimir for the beta <3

Somehow, this whole thing turned safe, sane AND consensual. With extra communication. I don't even know but it turns out these two can do that! Mind the tags for the kinks etc. <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

and if the devil was to ever see you, he'd kiss your eyes and repent

---

After the staff have left his house, Hannibal breathes a sigh of relief.

It is almost midnight when he and Will finally sit down on his couch and drink tea in comfortable silence.

"Did you enjoy yourself?"

"I did," Will sighs as he leans back into the cushions. "Though I mostly enjoyed the way Jack's brow furrowed in confusion when Dr. Sutcliffe asked if I was your Submissive and we neatly sidestepped the question."

"Jack is a proud man," Hannibal says, "and he does not understand the way we work. He tries to accept it, though, which deserves respect."

Will hums in agreement.

"I had an interesting conversation with Bella," Hannibal adds casually.

Will's eyebrow arches. "Oh?"

"Jack told her," to which Will's eyes flash protectively. "I do not mind. Much," Hannibal admits. "She had some insights to share about our shared dynamic."

“And her relaying your carefully chosen words back to Jack later today did not influence that conversation at all?” Will asks playfully.

Hannibal’s mouth curls. “It may have,” he says airily, “but Phyllis is an interesting woman with interesting views. It made me realize I might have some…” He searches for words. “*Preconceptions* about what a being a Submissive means that are not quite accurate in these times.”

Instead of taking the bait, Will smiles at him fondly.

“I’m glad.”

Putting his teacup away, Hannibal holds out his hands and sets Will’s to the side as well. As he puts his hands on his knees, Hannibal takes a slow breath and looks out of the window.

It is dark now, just a slight gap in the curtains showing the fountain in the middle of his garden. The movement of the water as it is sprayed up into the air, free and joyful, is calming. It trusts gravity to guide it down back to earth where it may become whole with the pond once more.

“I am very thankful that I have met you, Will.”

The moon is full today. Hannibal continues, the words bubbling up from somewhere within. “As the days pass by, I realize all the more how lucky I am to have someone to accept me for who I am. All of me.” Eight-course dinner parties and shattered teacups. Nights at the opera and a library spanning half the house. Blood on his hands and shoulders squared, chin up.

Hannibal rises from the couch and turns his face towards Will, who is watching him with open adoration. His eyes are warm and inviting, his posture relaxed.

No longer is he in doubt. Hannibal feels it in his bones, in his blood, in the very essence of his being.

For all the significance the gesture holds for him, for all it will set in motion, it is surprisingly simple to kneel down at Will’s feet and bare his neck for his Dominant.

“Please take care of me, Sir,” Hannibal says simply and waits.

As Hannibal kneels for Will out of his own free will, the Dominant feels momentarily overwhelmed.

Hannibal’s eyes are open, trusting, accepting, even as he clasps his hands behind his back. His lips are the definition of temptation as they shape themselves around those words that set Will on fire.

Will breathes in, out. Tilts his chin up.

“Go upstairs and wait for me on the bed,” he instructs clearly. “You may remove your shoes, socks, tie and suit jacket, but nothing more.”

Hannibal nods, and the little tension that was still visible in the line of his shoulders dissipates. “Yes, Sir,” he says, rises smoothly to his feet, and goes.

When Will joins him a few minutes later – filing away the samurai armour and crimson silken sheets to comment on later – he finds Hannibal sitting down on the edge of the bed, frowning at the bed as if it has offended him.

His clothes are off, as instructed. When Will puts the bag he was carrying down on the floor, Hannibal’s head snaps up.

The Sub looks hesitant, opening his mouth and then closing it again.

“You may speak freely unless instructed otherwise,” Will reminds him gently, warmth coursing though him.

“I was not sure how you wanted me,” Hannibal confesses as his eyes move to Will’s feet, body curving inwards. “Laying down or sitting up or-”

“Anyway you like,” Will interrupts his nervous rambling – and isn’t that something? “If I wanted something more specific,” he adds with a sly smile, “I would have said so.”

As Hannibal inclines his head, Will takes a breath. “What are your expectations for tonight, Hannibal?”

Will’s tone is serious and Hannibal straightens in response, a little alarmed.

“With which I mean,” Will adds, once again surprised by the unexpected insecurity peeking from beneath Hannibal’s façade, “what do you want us to do tonight? Do you want to have sex, do you want me to bring you under, do you have a specific scene in mind?”

There is a long silence before Hannibal speaks. Slowly, almost hesitatingly, the doctor answers. “I would like you to put me under tonight. I would also like for us to have sexual intercourse, if you are interested in the physical side of or relationship. I will confess to be,” a little disdain on the next word, “*inexperienced* in this regard. I have no specific wishes other than being able to touch and please you as much as possible.”

Will nods, cogs turning in his mind. “Would you like us to use condoms? I was tested a few months ago at my yearly physical, and have had no partners since, so the choice is up to you.”

“No,” Hannibal says almost before Will is done speaking, “that is not necessary. I am clean myself, and I do not want any barriers between us.” The Sub’s fingers twitch on the last few words. Will makes no comment.

“That’s good,” Will says, biting back his purr of satisfaction. “Concerning sex, how far would you like to go? Oral sex, or penetration as well?”

“Everything,” Hannibal answers resolutely.

“Me too,” Will says with a shuddering breath, then bites his lip. “And do you want to be, ah, giving or receiving? As in, top or bottom?”

It is only because Will is forcing himself to meet Hannibal’s eyes that he sees the confusion in the maroon orbs. Hannibal’s answer is just a beat off.

“I was not aware that was an option, Will.”

“It is.”

“Even with…”

“I assure you, Hannibal,” Will says with a smirk, “I will be able to dominate you no matter who fucks who.”

Enjoying the way Hannibal’s breath catches at the words, Will lets his shoulders relax and waits for the other man to decide.

Hannibal’s fingers twitch, and though his gaze does not waver, the doctor is staring fixatedly at the headboard. Twice he opens his mouth before closing it. After a full thirty seconds, the tendons at the back of the Sub’s neck relax.

“I would like for you to penetrate me,” Hannibal confesses as if it is a sin. “But,” the man adds, “I would like to inform you I have no experience in this act with another partner.”

Will stills, imagination flaring up at the words as the image of Hannibal guiltily fingering himself open in the privacy of his bedroom appears vividly in his mind.

“You like to make it difficult for me to stop myself from bending you over right here and now, don’t you, darling?”

The Sub bites his lip and lowers his eyes, though Will does not miss the ghost of a smile on his face.

Indulging himself and leaning forward for a kiss, their lips meet sweetly before Will pulls back.

“Alright, darlin’,” the Dom says as he grabs the bag he discarded earlier and sets it on the bed. “Before we begin,” Will says as he starts unloading items from the bag, “I would like to both set some rules and ask something more.”

The whip goes next to the blindfold as Will reaches down into the bag once more. The dildo joins the other items, then several more items again. After he’s done, the bed houses quite the collection.

As he was shopping a few weeks back, Will did not hold back at all, imagining Hannibal and his reactions as he browsed. He ended up buying far more than he’d planned.

Hannibal’s eyes are wide and his mouth has fallen open slightly.

When Will is finished, there are at least a dozen items laying on the bed.

“I’m not going to use all of this today,” the Dom says calmly, and smiles when a flash of disappointment flickers through Hannibal’s eyes. Will slowly trails his hand along some of the items, watching and enjoying the way his Sub shivers.

“Pick the ones you like,” Will commands, “and the ones you don’t, I’ll put away and will never use unless you specifically ask for it.”

As Hannibal starts to move, Will can see the fog of submission that had started to wrap its tendrils around the Sub dissipate. Good. There is a reason he’d asked that Hannibal keep most of his clothes – his armour – on. For this, he wants his partner aware and present.

When the Sub is done, there are only two items he has put away.

As Will gathers the blindfold and earplugs back into the bag, he hums. “No sensory deprivation?”

“I would like to always be completely aware of you, Will. Sir.”

“It’s okay,” Will says as he considers the choices carefully, “we’re not playing yet. Though you may use that form of address whenever you want.”

“Yes, Sir,” Hannibal answers cheekily.

Shooting him a smile, Will’s eyes return to the items on the bed. “Thank you for sharing this with me, sweetheart,” he says as he runs a casual hand through Hannibal’s hair. The doctor presses into it without thinking.

“Are you familiar with the traffic light system?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Good,” Will praises. “Green for approval and/or continue; yellow for uncomfortable or unfamiliar, which will lead to me either decreasing or increasing intensity,” once again Hannibal shivers, “and red to stop. Immediately and without questions. In most cases, I’ll start on aftercare immediately, unless you specify otherwise. If there is a scene that is particularly triggering for you or if I have caused you any kind of mental or physical harm,” Will adds seriously, “use black. That clear?”

Surely, Hannibal knew this already. But Will wants to be a good Dominant, and it never hurt to make sure. He is not unaware of the enormity of trust Hannibal is placing in his hands. The younger man is determined to worship his Submissive like a God. Like he deserves.

His Submissive. The thought lies sweetly in his mind.

“Yes, Sir.”

“Good boy,” Will praises, and Hannibal closes his eyes. “Stay with me, darling,” Will whispers as he sees Hannibal’s shoulders sag further. The Sub opens his eyes slowly,

petulantly, and Will is happy to note the awareness is still there.

“I have five rules for you,” Will says seriously as he stands opposite his Sub, looking Hannibal straight in the eyes.

“First rule: If I ask you *anything*, you’ll answer me honestly. If you do not want to answer, say so, and I will not push. The only exception to that is your colour; you will *always* give me a colour if I ask. You will not be punished no matter your answer.”

Hannibal nods.

“Second rule: When we are playing, you address me with either Sir or Master, whatever your preference.”

“Yes, Sir,” Hannibal says breathlessly. The doctor licks his lips.

“Third: You may speak and touch both me and yourself freely, except when I specify otherwise. The only exception to this is the fourth rule: You will not come without my permission.”

Hannibal moans.

“The fifth and last rule is for both of us. I’ll use my Commands sparingly,” Will says, “especially when we are just starting to know each other. However, if you ever want me to Command you, you can say so by using the words ‘command me,’ ‘make me,’ or ‘order me.’ If you ask, I will always obey and Command you. There is no right or wrong in this. You can ask me twenty times in a row or ask me never, and I will be happy with both.”

Will’s gaze is steady, and Hannibal lets out a shuddering breath. “Yes, Sir,” he says so sweetly, “I’ll be good.”

“I know you will,” the Dom says soothingly, wanting to move forward and press his Sub against the bed, cover him with his whole body until he feels nothing but Will.

Not yet.

“I have one last question before we truly begin,” Will says slowly. The earlier playfulness is gone. “For this as well, there is no wrong or right answer. I hope,” Will swallows, starts anew. “You should only accept this if you are comfortable with it. Whether you say yes or no will not make me care any more or less for you. Understood?”

Brows furrowing at the sudden change of tone, Hannibal takes a moment until he nods. “Yes, Sir,” the Sub says, and his voice is strong.

Willing his hands not to tremble, Will first removes the toys still on the bed to the side of the room, and once more reaches into the bag.

One item had not emerged from it yet. A simple square black box is presented to Hannibal, who goes still like a deer caught in the headlights.

Will does not waste any time opening it.

The box opens to reveal a sleek black collar, expensive leather shining in the low light of the room. There are two rings attached to it: one in the front, one in the back. Instead of the traditional plaque at both sides of the collar depicting the Dom's name, Will had decided to do something different. On the inside of the cloth *Will Graham* is inscribed in long, gold, cursive handwriting. Unseen to all but Hannibal himself.

Collaring your Submissive is taken as seriously as marriage. The ultimate claim of ownership, showing the whole world who belongs to whom.

Hannibal's eyes are on the collar. His face is blank. He has not moved a muscle.

"This is just for when we are playing," Will says quickly, trying to pass off his uncertainty as casualness. Hannibal will say no. He will say no, and it is okay, and Will had not expected anything otherwise. He just couldn't *not* at least offer it – he is serious. About Hannibal. So serious. And the Submissive should, must, know this.

"There is a mechanism at the back," Will adds in the silence, turning the band so that it is visible for them both, "which unclasps the collar at once. So if there is ever a moment during play that you want to get rid of it, you can. It's only if you want it," Hannibal is still frozen, still blank-faced, "it doesn't have to mean anything. It can. I mean, I would like it to. I mean, no, wait, I'm not expecting-"

Before Will can dig himself deeper, Hannibal comes to life.

"*Please*," the Submissive begs. Suddenly Hannibal is in front of him, on his knees. He tilts his chin up so that his neck is bare and visible, one shaking hand undoing the top two buttons of his dress shirt so his clavicles peak out temptingly. Will bites back a groan.

"Please, Sir," Hannibal begs frantically, and Will's breath leaves his body. "I want your collar, please," the Sub half-whines and Will is suddenly aware of the fact that he needs to move.

Calling on all his self-control to keep his cool, Will goes down on one knee in front of Hannibal.

"Are you sure?" he cannot help but ask.

The flash of annoyance in Hannibal's eyes is assuring. "Yes, Sir. Please collar me."

The Dominant inside of Will roars. With steady hands, Will moves the collar forward and clasps it gently around Hannibal's neck. The reassuring weight around a Submissive's neck is scientifically proven to be soothing and grounding, imitating their Dom's hand keeping them in place.

Hannibal sags as the collar clicks.

Will almost hates himself for what he is going to do next, but he has to be sure. If it's ever necessary, Hannibal has to know.

“Good boy,” he whispers soothingly, and Hannibal whines softly. “Now, if there is ever a moment you want to take it off, you can use the clasp.” The Submissive starts to shake his head as if abhorred at the thought, so Will sets a soothing hand on his shoulder.

“Just a what if, darling, just for practice. You know where the clasp is. Take if off, baby, show me you understand.”

“I don’t want to,” Hannibal whispers, fingers trembling as they rise up.

“It’s just for a moment,” Will reassures him, kissing his forehead. “Just to show me that you understand. I need to know you are safe, you are comfortable, that if you ever want to get out that you can. Show me, please?”

Hannibal whimpers but obeys. Slowly, his hands move upwards, towards his collar. There is a flash of pain in his eyes as his hands find the clasp, his instincts screaming at him to leave it alone.

In the end, though, Hannibal is stronger than his instincts. Even if right now it is only barely.

It takes a few seconds of fumbling before the collar clicks open.

“Good boy,” Will praises immediately as his hands move to quickly re-clasp the collar around Hannibal’s neck. The rising panic in Hannibal’s eyes subsides. He lets out a shaky breath.

“So good for me, baby,” Will says thickly, words spilling out. “I’m so happy you’ve chosen me, darling, I’ll make you feel so good. I’ll give you the *world*.”

Hannibal’s lips are soft and sweet against his, and Will’s chest rumbles with satisfaction.

After a moment he pulls back, stands up. With a sharp jut of his chin, Hannibal rises as well.

Time to rid the man of his armour.

“Strip,” Will commands curtly.

Hannibal’s eyes trail along Will’s face, then meet his eyes. The Sub’s gaze is steady, and Will knows what is coming before Hannibal has opened his mouth.

“Make me.”

Even though he knew it was coming, it still takes Will by surprise. The trust and willing submission in the words tilt his whole world on its axis, and Will lets the feeling of arousal bloom freely in his chest.

“***Strip,***” he Commands and Hannibal’s eyes turn hazy.

“Yes, Sir,” he whispers sweetly as his hands flow towards his own buttons. The dress shirt is thrown by the side of the bed, belt and slacks and underwear following soon after.

Hannibal stands before him, naked, hard cock jutting out proudly. Will feels his breath catch.

The only thing left on his body is the collar, *Will's* collar. Will's stomach tightens in arousal.

"Beautiful," he murmurs, and it is true. Hannibal is all lean lines and wiry muscle, stronger than he seems underneath the paisley. *A killer's body*, Will thinks, *a weapon*. Somehow the thought makes his cock twitch.

"Hands and knees," Will says roughly and Hannibal obeys. As the Submissive kneels on the middle of the bed Will's eyes are glued to the collar, then move down to the graceful curve of Hannibal's ass. Will has to stop himself from diving in and licking his Sub open on the spot, even as his cock hardens further at the thought.

"Such a good boy," Will says, to which Hannibal moans softly. "And all mine. All," Will trails his hands lovingly over the curve of Hannibal's ass, "*mine*."

"Yes, Sir," Hannibal agrees dreamingly. Will hums consideringly. He knows just what his Sub needs to fully sink under.

"Colour?"

"Green."

"Good boy," Will praises, and turns to the side to pick up the flogger Hannibal had selected earlier. The handle is sturdy, the tails not too long – a good tool for beginners.

Laying it on the foot of the bed, Will first moves forward to fist a hand in Hannibal's hair and tug his head up. Hannibal moves with him, greedily parting his lips for a kiss, which Will indulges happily. He trails his hands along Hannibal's chest, first circling a nipple, then pinching it. Hannibal moans softly.

Will doesn't hurry in moving his hands downwards, touching Hannibal as much as he can. Hannibal is not a man used to casual touches from anyone – a by-product of the aura of power he excludes. *But he deserves it*, Will thinks, *oh, he deserves it.*

As the Dom's hands start to massage Hannibal's ass-cheeks, Will mutters sweetly in Hannibal's ear. "Going to warm you up real good, darling," he says, one hand grabbing a handful of firm flesh, then giving it a light pat. "Going to make you soar."

Will pulls back swiftly but does not remove his hand from Hannibal's body, using the contact to keep the Sub grounded. Hannibal curves his back as Will stands behind him, offering himself blatantly.

"Such a good boy," Will says and brings his hand up, then down.

Slap.

Keeping his fingers together, the sound of skin hitting skin is sharp and seductive in the silent room. Hannibal moans in surprise and pleasure as the skin of his ass slowly starts to redden.

Will does not hesitate to spank him again and again and again, firm hands hitting the thick parts of Hannibal's ass in an upward motion.

Slap. Slap. Slap. Slap.

Careful to spread his attention, soon Hannibal's whole ass is growing warm and red. The man himself has started whimpering each time Will's hand lands on his skin.

Slap. Slap.

The air around them is electrified. Hannibal's head is bowed low towards the mattress, back arched slightly upwards. Will feels his mouth water, his arm itching to go harder – but he keeps himself under control. Hannibal is not quite floating yet, sunk halfway into subspace but not quite there yet.

Will is going to take him all the way.

Moving quickly, Will shoots forward and yanks Hannibal's head upwards. The doctor's face is flushed, his breath coming in short pants.

"Colour?"

"Green, green," Hannibal whimpers. "Please, Sir."

"Good boy." Will tenderly puts a hand on Hannibal's cheek, then hits his face lightly. Hannibal moves with the motion as if he is an extension of the Dom's own will.

"As this is your first time," Will says as he picks up the flogger, "we're starting with five. I want you to count, baby, can you do that for me?"

A affirmative moan is enough of an answer.

A little cruelly, Will trails the whisps of the flogger across Hannibal's back before pulling back. He waits a moment, then a moment longer. His Sub braces himself for impact at first, but it dissolves into a general sense of anticipation as he waits.

Just as Hannibal starts to open his mouth, Will strikes.

A flick of his wrist and the warmed-up skin of Hannibal's left cheek is hit squarely.

"One," Hannibal says breathlessly.

"Two," the second on the right. The sound reverberates loudly in the silence. The smell of sweat and arousal is thick in the air. Will feels warm, a little bit of sweat running down his back.

"My marks look so lovely on your skin, so beautiful," Will hears himself say. Hannibal shudders.

“Th-three,” as Will brings the flogger up and down once more, this time with a little more force behind it. Hannibal’s whole body shakes with adrenaline as a new set of stripes joins the others, a little lower this time.

Hannibal’s arms are unsteady, head bowed down and chest heaving. The pain is sharp now, Will knows, but will soon transform into a blanket of endorphins.

Just a little push.

Moving his arm up, Will makes as if to move, then halts. He sees Hannibal tense up, relax, and then Will strikes.

Hard.

“*Four!*”

The sound is like a thunderclap in the small room, the force behind the hit just on the edge of safe. Hannibal whines loudly, desperately, and for a moment Will thinks *shit* but then he understands.

“You can come, boy.”

Hannibal’s arms and legs unclench from where he was holding himself back. His hips twitch wantonly in the air, once, twice, and then thick spurts of white are coating the sheets beneath him.

Will moves forward immediately, murmuring sweet little nothings as he slides his arms over Hannibal’s back, praising him and pressing him down to the sheets simultaneously. Hannibal goes limp like a doll, the Sub now truly falling into subspace as his body relaxes and the endorphins hit.

Will gives it another second, then two, Hannibal mewling weakly as the Dom caresses Hannibal’s bright red ass and boneless legs.

Then he smiles. Moves back a little, one hand on Hannibal’s foot, the other on the flogger.

“One more, darling, can you do that for me?”

“Anything, Sir,” Hannibal breathes dreamily in the pillow.

“Good boy,” Will praises and brings the flogger down one more time.

Compared to the fourth strike, this one is almost gentle. Almost. Hannibal does not even jerk, just hums in enjoyment, savouring the pain. “Five,” he mummers contently, and Will does not waste a moment.

Seeing Hannibal let himself go, the beautiful Sub all spread out for him, Will finally rids himself from his clothes. He is naked within a flash, crawling up towards the headboard.

Hannibal obediently lifts his head upward and into Will's lap as Will makes space for himself, spreading his legs so the Sub can wiggle up between them.

"You've been such a good Submissive for me," the Dom says honestly, the words raw in his throat. "Now you deserve a reward."

"Thank you, Sir," Hannibal says, blinking and moving himself up on his elbows.

"You can even choose, baby, because you did so well. Would you like to suck me off, or shall I eat you out?"

"I want to taste you, Sir," Hannibal answers immediately, eyes bright and tongue flickering out to whet his lips. "I've wanted to taste you for so long."

"Then you may."

Will's cock is hard and thick, already so close to Hannibal's mouth. The impatient Sub does not waste a moment, simply bringing his head forward and taking Will fully down his throat in one smooth go.

The sight of Hannibal's lips stretched around his cock, collar peeking out as he moves is almost too much.

"*Hannibal*," Will moans loudly. Hannibal hums around his cock, tongue swirling sloppily around the shaft, then teasing the head. Floating as he is, the Sub's usual immaculateness and patience are replaced by a simple burning *need*.

Will is not complaining in the least.

"You feel so good, sweetheart," Will moans as Hannibal starts sucking him off like he has to prove himself. The heat and suction of the doctor's mouth are heavenly, the smell of sex slowly filling the air. Will puts his hands in the Sub's hair, not pushing yet, just a gentle pressure as Hannibal bobs his head. Hannibal's teeth graze the top of his shaft as he traces the thick underside with his tongue, and Will shivers, eyes fluttering.

The Dom forces himself to keep his eyes open, to look down as Hannibal slowly opens his eyes and meets Will's gaze.

Like this, the Sub is an open book. Will's mind starts to flood with images, fantasies both his own and his lover's, swirling together until they dream the same dreams.

"I have imagined you on your knees so often, filling your mouth with my cock," Will groans. "Me, grading papers in my office, patiently answering questions whenever a student comes calling, as all the while you are beneath my desk, warming my cock."

Hannibal whines softly and Will's eyes flash.

"You, in your kitchen, so in control as you conduct your performance and assemble your dish. How much I've wanted to swipe the knife from your hands, tease it around your neck and arms as I grab your hair and choke you on my cock."

Will feels his hands in Hannibal's hair tighten. Hannibal, still keeping his gaze, goes down *deep*, Will's cock hitting the back of his throat. Though the Sub's gag reflex kicks in, he does not move, and Will moans loudly at the feeling of the other man's throat constricting around him.

"Tonight, downstairs, all those *friends* of yours," he growls mockingly, "demanding your time, laying their hands on you. They were unworthy. I wanted to rip them off you, cut off their hands for daring to touch you, then bend you over the dinner table in full view and fuck you until the only thing you know is my name. So they all know who you belong to."

Hannibal makes a noise that sounds like *yes, please* but it is lost around his cock. Will feels the warmth in his groin start to expand, to build, and he grips Hannibal's hair in both hands.

"I want to dress you up," Will moans as he forces the Sub's head up, giving him a moment to catch his breath. "Your legs would look beautiful in stockings, wrapped around my waist. Your ass plugged up, still full of my come, as you go around your day – maybe I'll even give you a tail," he adds with a sly grin.

Hannibal, hair in disarray and pupils blown so wide the maroon of his eyes is nowhere to be seen, whimpers. "Please," he begs, and Will's lips curve in a smile.

Will is close, so close, denying himself as much as he is Hannibal. The Sub's tongue is flickering out, begging to taste his Dom. But Will can't help himself. Hannibal is so sweet when he is desperate.

He holds him back just a few seconds longer.

"I'll visit you in your office and fill your mouth with my seed, claim you, so that the taste of me stays with you all day," Will says and pulls Hannibal back on his cock.

He presses down forcefully, forcing Hannibal to take him deep until he cannot go further. The Sub's eyes flutter in pleasure, his body trembling. There are tears in the corners of Hannibal's eyes.

He does not break their gaze.

The muscles of the profiler's stomach start to tighten as his orgasm builds.

Will moans loudly and starts fucking his lover's mouth brutally. "I'll watch you as you cut up your next victim," he half-growls, barely aware of the words coming out of his mouth, Hannibal as much in his mind as he is in his. "Collar on full display as you overpower them. Make you cut them up in front of me, display them just as I command, bend you over and fuck you even as the last breath leaves their bodies-"

Wherever he was going next is lost as Hannibal, his sweet Submissive, makes an unmistakable sound around his straining cock.

The Whine pushes Will over the edge, and as he goes he snarls, unable to keep the Dominance out of his voice- "***Swallow***."

Hannibal's mouth is flooded with wave after wave as Will comes, pressing Hannibal's face into his groin as the Sub's throat works around him. Finally, Hannibal's eyes fall closed, the man greedily swallowing every last drop, the added Command only heightening the moment.

Will's whole body shudders in release, tension leaving his body with his orgasm. He moves until he is laying next to his partner, kissing Hannibal's mouth, his face, his neck. "Perfect," he murmurs, "you were perfect for me."

Will's hands explore Hannibal's body, curving around his biceps, his wrist, his ass. When they graze along Hannibal's groin, he is not surprised to find him half-hard, body once again filled with arousal and valiantly trying to gear up for another round.

"Don't worry, baby," Will whispers against Hannibal's lips, "we are not done yet."

Hannibal has transcended the boundaries of his old self.

All his life he had fought (and prevailed) against the one part of him that he hated. Now that he had finally accepted it, seen the possibilities, the strength, Hannibal feels like he has Become.

Here, in Will's arms, the Sub feels transformed. Changed. Will has changed him.

And he has changed Will in return.

Floating in subspace as he is, Hannibal's thoughts are hazy. The world has a faint glow around it, every sensation amplified, every pleasure ever-lasting. The taste of Will in his mouth is still clear, deliciously sweet and bitter with the smell of their joining all around them.

Hannibal moans softly. Not with purpose, just a sound that has to escape his body.

He has never felt so free.

Finally, he has found his equal.

Dimly the doctor is aware of Will leaving, reacting with a forlorn sound. Will returning, with gentle hands and a warm washcloth. He is cleaned, caressed as the Dom massages a cool cream on the abused skin of his buttocks.

Though the doctor in Hannibal knows that this is a good thing, the Sub inside himself whines softly at the gentling of the burn. He liked the pain. Wanted more.

His body is nudged from his side to his belly, and Hannibal obeys without a thought. He is Will's to command now. His body is hot with arousal. Aflame, like a victory pyre.

He hopes his Dom is going to fuck him now.

Hannibal feels a hand trailing up between his legs and opens them eagerly, curving his back and whining softly, silently begging his Dom to finally claim him.

“Good boy,” Will’s voice comes from somewhere far above him. Hannibal shivers in pleasure, the words still as fulfilling as the first time his Dom uttered them.

“Colour?”

“Green,” Hannibal forces himself to answer. To verbalize, instead of simply letting out the pleasure inside of him in moans and noises like a symphony. He knows the rules. He will be good.

“Perfect,” Will’s voice comes once more, and Hannibal preens unseen into the pillow. It still smells like Will where he had been sitting on it earlier. It feels soft and wet against his skin. He breathes in again, deeply.

Hannibal’s body startles at the sudden feeling between his legs. Hannibal knows his hole is twitching, begging for Will’s cock. It is not the blunt tip of Will’s cock, ready to take him completely, not caring that he’s still dry. There is a stab of disappointment in Hannibal’s gut.

The disappointment is replaced by arousal as Will’s tongue circles his entrance.

“*Oh*, *seras*” Hannibal moans in Lithuanian as Will starts eating him out expertly. Then does not say anything more, words lost in the waves of pleasure.

The tongue swirls and caresses his rim, teasing the muscle open before eventually dipping inside. The feeling is foreign, but Hannibal feels his hips pushing back into it, wanting more.

Hannibal’s cock starts to thicken painfully, still sore from his earlier orgasm. He is twitching as Will’s hands creep up to knead the abused skin of his ass in the same rhythm as the Dom’s tongue fucking in and out of him.

Finally, Will is inside of him. Hannibal moans as Will’s tongue goes deeper, twists around, then disappears. The older man whines in disapproval. Taking a moment to grab a bottle of mouthwash from the nightstand and rinsing, Will caresses the Sub’s leg lovingly.

“So impatient,” his Dom murmurs, and Hannibal buries his head sideways in the pillow. Takes a deep breath, tether still strong around his soul.

Only to jerk up again as two wet fingers breach him in one go.

“Sir,” Hannibal says wantonly as the fingers start pulling in and out of him, scissoring slightly. It feels good, yes, but he wants to be tight for his Dom. He wants Will to force him open, to feel the burn for weeks, taking pleasure in knowing who it belongs to.

“Please, Sir,” Hannibal says hesitatingly, still unused to the idea that he can speak without permission. He’s not sure he likes the freedom. Maybe he’ll ask Will to change that, next time.

Next time.

“No more than two fingers, please,” he asks, words only slurring a little. “I want to feel you.” The bed is soft and warm against his back. His ceiling looks like it has sprung into existence from another world.

Will is silent behind him, and for a moment Hannibal thinks he’s made a mistake. But then his Dom pulls out of him and moves forward, his whole body covering Hannibal’s, teeth teasing the nape of his neck.

“You are perfect,” Will breathes against his neck. “You are a temptation even the Gods cannot resist.” Will’s teeth graze his vulnerable skin and Hannibal keens lowly, yes, yes. “I’ll make you feel me, darling. I’ll make you mine, don’t you worry.”

“Yours,” Hannibal agrees.

“Now,” Will says as he stands up, gone for only a moment before he returns. His Dom’s arms circle around him, guide his arms, crossing them in front of his chest.

Hannibal’s world is still hazy, slow-moving, as if he’s in a warm bath that’s filled with liquid arousal instead of water. The click of the cuffs securing his wrists only registers vaguely.

There is something reassuring about the weight of the cuffs on his arms, wrists locked together in front of him. Hannibal can still move his arms as a whole, up and down, prop himself higher or lower if Will would forcefully turn him around and started fucking his slick hole.

The thought is seductive, but there is an undercurrent of unease.

“So pretty,” Will says as he caresses the cuffs with one hand, the collar with another. Hannibal tilts his head back, brows furrowing a bit. “Such a pretty little pet, all for me.”

Hannibal moves to respond a second too late. “Yours, Sir.”

Will straightens. “Colour, darling?”

Hannibal does not answer for a moment. Will’s grip on his hip tightens in warning.

“Yellow,” Hannibal says. The words feel clumsy in his mouth.

“Good boy,” Will praises as a hand comes upwards and yanks Hannibal’s head downwards roughly. Hannibal’s eyes flutter, moaning softly even as his head lolls slightly.

Will catches his gaze for a long moment. “Explain it to me, darling.”

“I,” he swallows, “I don’t know.” He doesn’t. “I’m sorry.”

Will shushes him. “Don’t be, darling, we’ll figure it out. Is it the cuffs?”

Reluctantly, Hannibal nods.

“Too much?” A slow headshake. “Too tight?” Another no. “Too loose?”

Hannibal hesitates, considering it, before slowly shaking his head once more ‘no.’

Will breathes in suddenly. “Too little?” he asks next, stroking a hand down Hannibal’s sweat-clad back. “You want more, baby?”

Yes. That’s it. Hannibal nods frantically, suddenly not trusting himself to speak.

“I’m happy that you answered my questions honestly, sweetheart. Such a good boy.” Warmth, spreading through Hannibal’s body. “Now stay here and wait for me. Don’t move.”

Hannibal doesn’t even nod.

An approving pat on his ass, the still-sore skin warming up pleasantly, and Will is gone, somewhere outside of the reality of Hannibal’s world, which has shrunken down to this bed and this bed only.

When his Dom returns a moment later, there is something crimson in his arms.

Hannibal’s pupils dilate.

The rope is rough against his skin. It is looped around his chest, his back, through the rings in his cuffs and more importantly, those in his collar.

Will’s face is full of concentration as he criss-crosses the rope across Hannibal’s skin. It doesn’t really impair Hannibal’s movement; his arms are already bound. The only difference is that he can’t move them downwards anymore because of the rope stuck to the collar, only up.

But the feel of it-

It is like Will’s hands are all over him simultaneously, pressing against him and keeping his soul inside his body, where it should be. It is safe, the chafe from the rope against his skin just the right side of painful to make it real.

When Will is done, he leans back slowly. The Dom’s tongue is flickering across his mouth, and cock – which had made valiant twitchy attempts for a while now – finally starts to harden again.

Hannibal preens.

He can’t help himself.

“*Beautiful*,” Will breathes reverently. “You look perfect, my love.” Will’s voice catches, turns rough. “All mine.”

There are a lot of moments in his life that Hannibal remembers with great pleasure. The only childhood memory he has of his family. His first kill, tearing the monster who’d taken Mischa from him apart piece by piece, then consuming him. The first time he displayed someone. Being dubbed *Il Mostro* and getting away with it, the gaze of Inspector Pazzi as he left the station.

This single moment tops all of them. Easily.

Hannibal is smitten.

“All yours,” he says, “*mylimasis*.”

Though Will doesn’t know what exactly the words means, he can take a guess.

The Lithuanian word – the only thing it can be – falls sinfully from Hannibal’s lips. Bound like this in crimson and black, he looks like the Devil’s greatest prize, and he is all Will’s.

The Devil could claw out of the earth right now and try to take his Sub away from him. He could try.

“So beautiful,” Will says as he presses a greedy kiss against Hannibal’s lips. The Sub moans, and Will grabs his hair, pulling. The smell of Hannibal’s arousal against his nose is heavenly, and Will breathes it with abandon.

Another hand creeps down, teasing between Hannibal’s cheeks. He is still warm and wet. Ready for him.

Hannibal pulls against Will’s grip on his hair, but not like he wants to get away. More like he just wants to feel it.

The submission and need in that single pull are suddenly too much. Will growls loudly, yanking Hannibal backwards and inserting himself between the older man’s legs, their hard cocks rubbing against each other.

Will bites back a moan, watches as Hannibal fails to do the same, and leans close.

“You want me to fuck you, baby?”

“Sir, please,” Hannibal’s face is flushed and sweaty, eyes unseeing.

“Be the first one to touch that hidden part of you, make you mine, paint your walls with my seed?”

“Please, please-”

“Beg me.”

“*Make* me.”

“***Beg me***,” Will snarls.

Hannibal gasps as the Command washes over him, leaving his whole skin tingling and his cock twitching even as words start to tumble from his mouth. “Please, Sir, fuck me, split me open with your cock, fill me up completely, carve a space inside of me that’s only for you, only for you, Sir, please claim me I cannot-”

Will growls and pushes in, his cock stretching Hannibal's virgin hole beautifully as Hannibal keens in pleasure. The Sub is so tight around him that Will sees stars, mouth watering and chest rumbling.

"Yes," Hannibal says as Will sets a punishing pace, "yes, yes, yes-"

"Say my name. Say you're mine."

"Will," Hannibal sobs, "I'm yours, I'm yours, Will, Will, *Will, Will.*" It is like a chant, a mantra, a prayer to the divine made into flesh.

Will moans at the words, one hand shooting out to grab the back ring of Hannibal's collar where the rope meets leather. He pulls at it, harshly, and the collar starts to cut off Hannibal's airway.

Hannibal starts to gasp for air, body alight and trembling, moaning even as his breath stutters. Will smiles cruelly even as his head tips back in pleasure, hips snapping forward again and again as he buries himself inside his Submissive.

The Sub makes an incomprehensible noise, body tight as Will lets go of his collar, not once slowing down.

"Green, green" Hannibal whines desperately without prompting as the breath once again enters his body, and Will's hand shoots upwards.

Placing his fingers just above the collar, pinching the arteries with precision, Will cuts off his Sub's blood flow to the head without obscuring his breathing.

"Knew you'd like this, sweetheart," he says as his cock moves in and out Hannibal's tight hole, the Sub clenching and unclenching as he is filled for the first time. "Such a good boy. Such a hardworking Sub, always so strong, so powerful. Let me take the world off your shoulders and carry it for you," Will says tenderly even as his grip tightens.

Hannibal groans, hands straining against his cuffs as his body curves upward, moving his legs as wide as he can go. Displaying himself.

"Sir," he says weakly and Will cuts him off with a kiss.

Will thrusts forward again, and again, Hannibal's head turning red and then purple as they both start approaching the edge as one. The coil in Will's gut grows tighter, tighter, he feels Hannibal's muscles spasming-

With a great force of will, Will pushes himself out of and off his Submissive in one second.

"***Don't come***," he Commands just in time. Hannibal keens loudly, hands gripping his cuffs tightly and legs straining against the sheet as he thrusts upward into nothing, tethering so badly on the edge only the Dominance in the words keeps him from coming.

Will has grabbed the base of his own cock, panting in pleasure as he watches Hannibal's face return to its normal colour, body almost drooping comically as it realizes it is not allowed to

come.

“Rule number four?” he asks his Submissive as he catches his breath.

“No,” Hannibal pants, “no coming without permission.”

“Good boy,” Will praises, stepping forward and petting Hannibal’s leg. The man sighs. “Now turn around, baby. Present yourself to me.”

Slowly, sluggishly, Hannibal does as he’s commanded. His limbs are slow and heavy but his mind is full of bliss. His tied hands hinder him only marginally.

The movement is instinctual, satisfying. Slowly, Hannibal props himself on one knee, then two. Spreads them, head and chest already close to the mattress due to his bound arms.

He ducks his head and arches his back.

A perfect lordosis position.

Will is mesmerized.

“Perfect,” he praises, stepping behind the Sub presenting himself for him, rewarding his behaviour by resisting the urge to tease.

Will rubs his cockhead against Hannibal’s hole, watches it open for him, beg him to take him in.

There is a vague plan in his head to go slowly, to tease Hannibal with gentle strokes until he falls apart, but all the rational thought goes out of his head the moment Will enters his Submissive once more.

The velvet heat around him, the smell of sex in the air, the way Hannibal moans at Will’s thick cock spreading him open.

Will covers Hannibal’s body with his own and starts fucking him like an animal.

The sound of flesh on flesh in the air is obscene. Hannibal’s moans and pants fill the air like a complementing instrument in an orchestra. As the Dom breathes in harshly and tilts his hips, Hannibal’s moans turn to loud cries as Will starts hitting his prostate mercilessly.

Will’s hands claw at his lover’s body, pulling at the rope, gripping his hips and waist so hard it will leave bruises. The profiler’s blood rushes in his ears as he feels Hannibal constrict under him.

The doctor’s legs splay open wider, hips trembling as a drop of pre-come drips from his red and swollen cock.

Will is a good Dom. This is why he does not torture Hannibal any longer.

“You may come,” he commands, and sinks his teeth into Hannibal’s shoulder immediately afterwards.

Hannibal cries out, loudly, hips stuttering as Will drags up the last of his reserves and thrusts in *hard* and *deep* once, twice, before the Sub finally comes.

“Good boy,” Will says between licking and sucking the blood from Hannibal’s shoulder. His pace calms down, harsh thrusts turned slow and dragging, cock thick and straining within his Sub’s body.

Hannibal sobs in pleasure, come spurting out of him and dirtying the bedsheets. “Coming just on my cock, just for me,” another nip of Hannibal’s skin. “So perfect, so good.”

Underneath him, Hannibal slumps to the bed bonelessly. Face-plants into the mattress with a sigh.

He mumbles something, and Will kisses his neck, pulls his head to the side. “Again,” he coos.

“Use me, Sir,” Hannibal begs softly and Will’s breath stutters to a halt.

“*Yes*,” he growls and does.

Hannibal barely moves underneath him as Will pounds into him again and again, only concerned with his own pleasure now that his Submissive is sated. He thrusts himself again and again into Hannibal’s warm and willing flesh, all his.

“***Mine***,” he growls ferally and sheathes himself deep into his lover as his body is finally tipped over the edge.

The orgasm feels like jumping off a cliff, head-first. There is nothing around him but the blood rushing in his ears, his Sub’s flesh between his teeth, the warmth around his cock as Will fills him up with his come. Will’s hips stutter, and he feels a rush of endorphin at Hannibal’s soft and happy moan.

“Sir,” like a prayer.

Using the last bit of energy he has, Will grabs the item he had prepared off the nightstand and sucks on it once.

Then he pulls out slowly, ignoring Hannibal’s whine as the plug in his hand replaces his cock instantly.

“There,” he sighs, patting Hannibal’s ass. “That’ll keep you filled up all night. Make my claim on you soak into you like it should have been all along.”

Hannibal tenses, then relaxes. Hums. “Green,” he sighs, a little too happily.

Will cocks his head, eyes narrowing in surprise. “Tell me.”

Hannibal looks at him through half-lidded eyes, still floating. “This way,” he says. “you’ll be able to take me tonight whenever you please. Sir.”

Will stares at him wordlessly. He wondered what entity had he accidentally pleased to deserve a man like Hannibal.

Shaking his head, Will moves to take off the rope, then the cuffs. He puts both items away, then grabs a warm washcloth and cleans them both, moving gently around the plug.

When it’s done, he draws Hannibal under the covers into his arms.

Pulls back slightly.

To Will’s surprise, there are tears rolling down Hannibal’s cheeks. The Sub is not making a sound, not reacting at all. His eyes are open and vulnerable.

“You were amazing,” Hannibal whispers.

Will chuckles. “Thought I was supposed to say that,” he teases, then turns serious. “You were beautiful. Communicative, reactive, and so sexy I don’t even have words for it, Hannibal.”

Hannibal couldn’t hold back his smile if he wanted to. “I would have never dared if you had not been there to guide me through it.”

Will smiles, then kisses the top of Hannibal’s head. He wipes the last of the tear-tracks away with a wet thumb. “There is nothing I would not do for you. I love you, Hannibal.”

Hannibal closes his eyes with a smile. “And I you, *mylimasis*.”

Will brings their mouths together confidently. Hannibal does not hesitate to respond, his hunger never sated.

They drift off to sleep as they lie there, two halves of a whole, tongues mingling and souls trying their hardest to merge.

I love you, as certain dark things are to be loved,
in secret, between the shadow and the soul.

- Pablo Neruda: XVII (I do not love you...)

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all liked it! Feel free to prompt me Hannigram, you never know (:

Comments and kudos are love <3

End Notes

If you like sub!hannibal come find us at discord - discord.gg/7zBaj5Xu2G

Comments and kudos are love <3 Writers are thirsty bitches.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!